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DRAGON™

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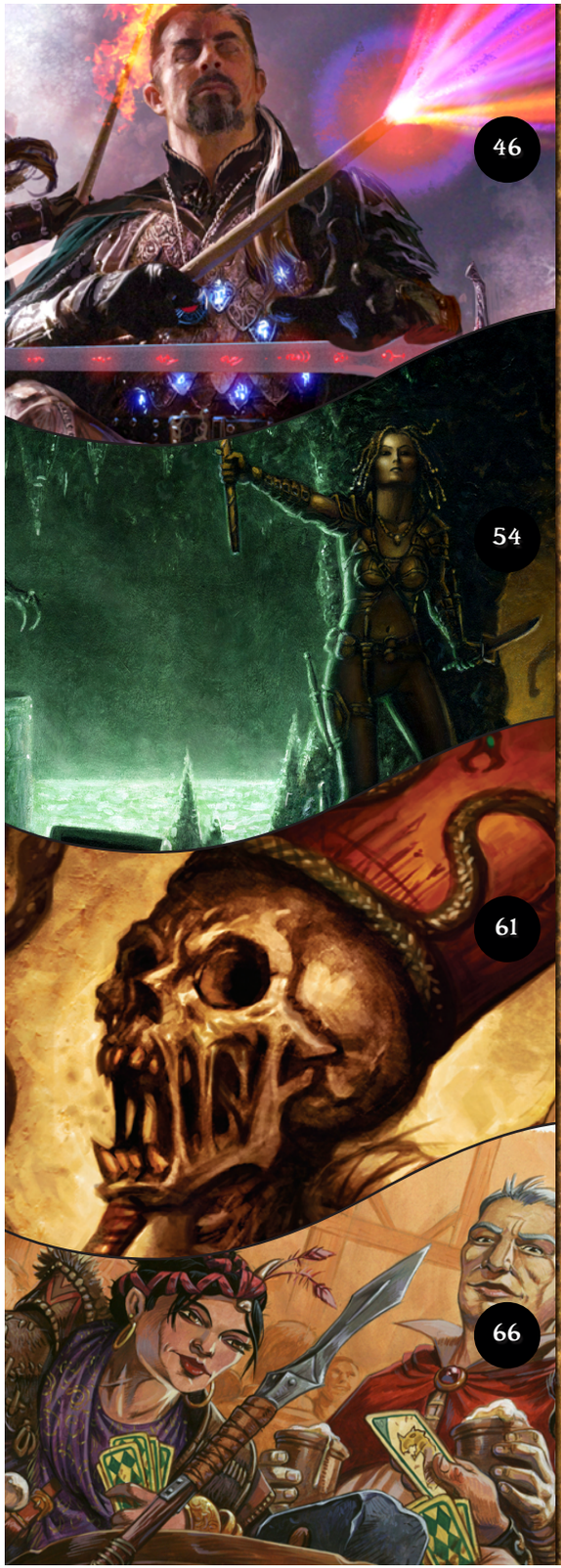

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What's Coming Next

Our first 4th Edition issue is now one for the e-books. Based on what we've been hearing from everyone out there surfing the tubes, #364 seems to be a success. I certainly feel pretty happy with the content, and none of it would have been possible without the awesome support of the D&D Insider team, especially Bart Carroll, Stacy Longstreet, Chris Perkins, and Steve Winter, as well as the rest of RPG R&D. What a fantastic group!

If you've already glanced through the #364 compilation, you might have noticed that we made some changes—tweaks, really—to a few articles. It turns out that our new digital release medium allows us to make corrections to articles after they've gone live. So we're taking advantage of that fact, listening to our staff and readers like you, and making corrections to articles before the compilations go live. We're listening to all our fans an contributors, many of whom sent in helpful corrections, and we're more than willing to make changes as needed to give you the best possible D&D experience in these pages.

On another topic, over the next few months, you lucky readers are likely to notice something of a trend. We're going to be showing you all sorts of new features pretty much every month. At some point, we'll likely settle into a rhythm, but for now, we're taking the opportunity to finally launch some of the great ideas we've been kicking around the office for more than a year.

In this issue, we have an especially big surprise in store. As you've likely noticed—because, really, who stops to read the editorial when there's a juicy feature to download—the first of our new features is already live. Our Playtest series will be a new recurring feature in Dragon. Every so often, we're getting clearance from the powers that be to showcase something (typically a class, but sometimes something else entirely) from a print product that might not even be in the catalog yet.

This month, we're bringing you a first look at a build from the artificer, which won't see print until the release of 4th Edition Eberron in 2009. The artificer is ready to drop right into your D&D game, whether you're playing an Eberron campaign or not. On top of that, it's completely RPGA legal, which means you should be rolling up your first artificer . . . now!

That said, these Playtest articles come with a pretty big disclaimer: These rules are subject to change. When the print version finally hits the shelves, it's likely—almost certain, in fact—that some of the features and powers of the class will have changed.

Other new features we'll be rolling out this month include the Codex of Betrayal, which is to devils as the Demonomicon of Iggwilv is to demon princes. Plus, the newly redesign Backdrop series is back, with a look at Cormyr, and our first 4th Edition Ecology article will also show up later this month. So stick around, keep sending in your feedback, and keep checking back with us every week!

"I see the secret patterns of magic, and through the items I carry, I can use that magic to protect you, heal you . . . or make you explode."

CLASS TRAITS

Role: Leader. You channel arcane power into items that empower your allies and hinder your enemies.
Power Source: Arcane. The cryptic formulas of arcane magic and the complex recipes of alchemy appeal to you. You are especially knowledgeable about magic items.
Key Abilities: Intelligence, Constitution

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged
Implements: Orbs, rods, staffs, wands
Bonus to Defenses: +1 Fort, +1 Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 12 + Constitution score
Hit Points per Level Gained: 5
Healing Surges per Day: 7 + Constitution modifier

Trained Skills: Arcana. From the class skills list below, choose four more trained skills at 1st level.
Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Dungeoneering (Wis), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Perception (Wis), Thievery (Dex)

Build Option: Battlesmith
Class Features: Arcane Replenishment, Healing Infusion

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Playtest: Artificer

by Logan Bonner, Mike Mearls & David Noonan

illustrations by William O'Connor

Artificers treat mastery of magic like a technical skill. They see a pattern in energy and matter, and they develop an understanding of how to manipulate the flow of arcane energy in and around material objects and creatures. Artificers learn to channel magic into items by using complex chains of sigils and diagrams or by using magical materials. With their skills, they can assemble the perfect magical object for any situation.

As an artificer, you might have learned your craft through a variety of means. You could be a formal student of arcana who became interested in magic items and artifacts. Maybe you're a tinkerer who devised magic tools in a musty basement. Or perhaps you are an explorer who found your knowledge in forgotten places.

With a bandolier slung across your chest, you carry an arsenal of alchemical compounds, magical implements,

mundane materials, and tools. You mix reagents, drink potions, and craft items. And you use your knowledge to infuse yourself and your allies with arcane power. One day, your magical skills will carry you into legend.

Creating an Artificer

This article features the battlesmith. As a battlesmith, you focus on healing allies and strengthening allies with your spells. You infuse allies' weapons and armor with magic, creating effects that shield friends while harming enemies. Your spells rely on Intelligence for accuracy and Constitution for potency.

Battlesmith Artificer

Improved healing and powers that improve allies' abilities are the focus of this build. Suggested powers aren't included below because all powers in this article are intended for the build.

Suggested Feat: Durable (Human feat: Toughness)
Suggested Skills: Arcana, Heal, History, Perception, Thievery

Artificer Class Features

You have the following class features.

Arcane Replenishment

Your study of magic items has given you the ability to manipulate the power contained within such objects. You can restore energy drained from a magic item. During a short rest, you can recharge an item's daily power. You can recharge an item that has a level less than or equal to your level + your Intelligence modifier.

You can use arcane replenishment once per day, plus you gain one additional use for each milestone you reach. An item can be recharged by arcane replenishment only once per day.

Components

Your weapons, implements, and other gear are inscribed with runes and mystic patterns. You carry esoteric reagents and materials, along with tiny crafted objects that you use to create your artifices (see below). Eventually, you also pack a large number of magic items. If you don't have what you need, you can transmute mundane materials into components. After an extended rest, you craft, imbue, or prepare the objects and compounds you need to use your powers for the day.

Healing Infusion

The artificer's Healing Infusion class feature works like a power. The Healing Infusion class feature encompasses multiple powers. An artificer can access powers from this class feature twice per encounter. At 16th level, you can access powers from this class feature three times per encounter.

Healing Infusion: Restorative Formula
Artificer Class Feature

You breathe arcane energy into a special mixture of restorative compounds. You then blow that mixture into the air, focusing it on someone in need.

Encounter (Special) ✦ **Arcane, Healing**
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
(10 at 11th level, 15 at 21st level)
Target: You or one ally in burst
Effect: The target can spend a healing surge and regain an additional 1d6 hit points.
Increase the amount of additional hit points regained to 2d6 at 6th level, 3d6 at 11th level, 4d6 at 16th level, 5d6 at 21st level, and 6d6 at 26th level.
Special: You can use a *healing infusion power* twice per encounter, but only once per round. At 16th level, you can use a *healing infusion* power three times per encounter, but only once per round.

What's a Playtest Article

This article, presenting the artificer, is the first in a new semi-regular feature in Dragon. Every few months, we're going to give you a sneak peek at content scheduled for release in a print product sometime in the coming year or so. That means this content is not finished. That's right, you're looking at something that's still being worked on by our designers, developers, and editors.

In this case, we're presenting the artificer, which is scheduled for release in 2009 in the Eberron Player's Guide. This article presents a single build for the artificer, from 1st to 30th level. That means that not only is this content liable to change between now and when you see the class in print, but you're only seeing a portion of the class's eventual suite of powers. Everything you see here is still eminently playable, so feel free to create your first artificer character and start playing.

Because this class isn't done, though, we're also asking for your feedback. If you have comments on the artificer, feel free to send them to dndinsider@wizards.com. Include the subject line "Artificer Playtest Feedback" in the subject line, and be specific! If your comments are of the "I just don't like it" or "I think it's great" nature, that won't help us make this class the best it can be. The more specific you are in the nature of your comments, the better. So dig deep and tap that inner game designer!

Artificer Overview

Characteristics: You direct arcane energy to protect your allies while harming your opponents. Most of your attacks are area or ranged, and you deal moderate damage. Your powers, including healing, are versatile despite these minor limitations.

Religion: Artificers favor knowledge over faith, so only a few artificers devote themselves to a specific deity. Corellon and Ioun appeal to an artificer's passion for magic and understanding, and Erathis and Moradin are natural choices for artificers due to each deity's influence in technology, crafting, and civilization. Pious artificers might invoke any of these deities at the appropriate time.

Races: Dwarves were the first artificers, combining their race's crafting skills with magic. Other races likely to produce artificers include humans, eladrin, gnomes, and warforged.

Ritual Caster

You gain the Ritual Caster feat as a bonus feat, allowing you to use magical rituals. You possess a ritual book, and it contains two rituals you have mastered: Make Whole (*Player's Handbook*, page 309) and one other 1st-level ritual of your choice.

Implements and Weapons

Artificers make use of rods, staffs, and wands to help channel and direct their arcane powers. Without an implement, an artificer can still use artificer powers, including those that have the implement keyword. An artificer wielding a magic rod, staff, or wand can add its enhancement bonus to the attack rolls and the damage rolls of artificer powers, as well as artificer paragon path powers, that have the implement keyword.

Some artificer powers have the weapon keyword and often require a ranged weapon. If the ranged weapon fires ammunition, the ammunition carries the power's effect. Otherwise, the weapon carries the effect. When the attack is made, a mundane weapon returns to the artificer like a magic thrown weapon does.

Artificer Powers

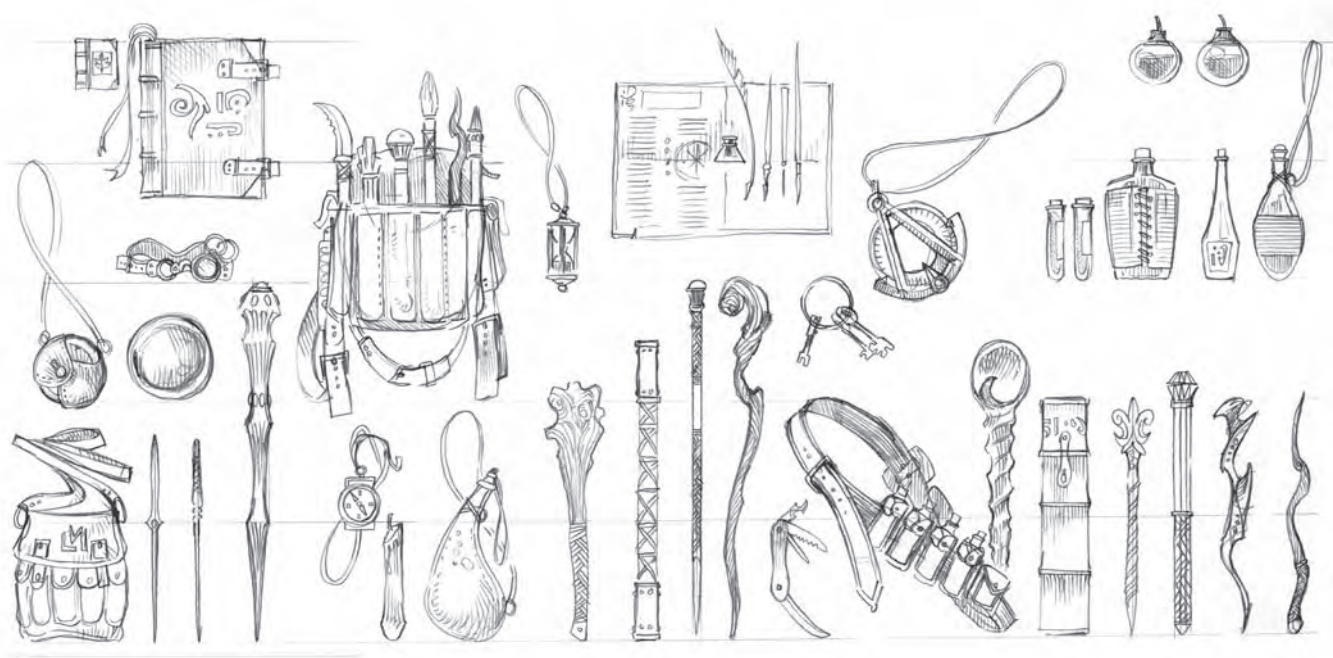
Your arcane powers are called spells, though many artificers refer to spells that instill magic in objects as "infusions." The powers here also introduce a new keyword: artifice.

Artifice: An artifice is an object that consists of inanimate materials that are infused with and animated by magic. It does not occupy a square unless a power states otherwise. As a minor action, you can make your artifice move a number of squares equal to your Constitution modifier, or you can shift it 1 square. The artifice's defenses equal your level + 4,

Healing Infusion: Curative Admixture
Artificer Class Feature

Casting your restorative compound into the air, you create a cloud that you infuse with arcane energy to bolster you and your comrades.

Encounter (Special) ✦ **Arcane**
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
(10 at 11th level, 15 at 21st level)
Targets: You and each ally in burst
Effect: Each target can spend a healing surge to gain temporary hit points equal to your Constitution modifier + 1.
Increase the amount of temporary hit points gained to Constitution modifier + 2 at 6th level, Constitution modifier + 3 at 11th level, Constitution modifier + 4 at 16th level, Constitution modifier + 5 at 21st level, and Constitution modifier + 6 at 27th level.
Special: You can use a *healing infusion* power twice per encounter, but only once per round. At 16th level, you can use a *healing infusion* power three times per encounter, but only once per round.



and it has hit points equal to your healing surge value. If an artifice drops to 0 hit points or is consumed, it is destroyed. If the effect an artifice creates ends without the artifice being destroyed, the artifice reverts to its inert form. You can reuse an artifice that has reverted to its inert form.

Action Type

Some artificer powers do not have an action type and instead require a longer casting time—usually a short rest. You must spend the required time to use the power because often the power requires you to craft an item, combine ingredients, or infuse an object with a large amount of arcane energy. If you are interrupted or unable to spend the required time, the power has no effect but is not expended.

Rotes

All artificers know the *repair object* rote, a simple spell that can aid them in daily tasks.

Repair Object — Artificer Rote

You weave arcane energy into an object, restoring it to its intended structure.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Healing
Minor Action **Melee** touch
Target: One object
Effect: The target regains a number of hit points equal to your healing surge value. You cannot repair an object that has been reduced to 0 hit points.

Level 1 At-Will Spells

Thundering Armor — Artificer Attack 1

Pointing your implement, you make your friend's armor pulse with energy, protecting that ally and knocking a single foe away with the intense reverberation.

At-Will ✦ Arcane, Implement, Thunder
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One ally
Effect: The primary target gains a +1 power bonus to AC until the end of your next turn. Make an attack.
Secondary Target: One creature adjacent to the primary target
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + Intelligence modifier thunder damage, and you push the secondary target 1 square away from the primary target.
Increase damage to 2d6 + Intelligence modifier at 21st level.

Aggravating Force — Artificer Attack 1

When your infused weapon strikes an enemy, the weapon unleashes a force that amplifies subsequent damage.

At-Will ✦ Arcane, Force, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier force damage. Until the end of your next turn, the next attack against the target from one of your allies gains a +2 power bonus to the attack roll.
Increase damage to 2[W] + Intelligence modifier at 21st level.

Level 1 Encounter Spells

Spike Wire — Artificer Attack 1

As your projectile flies forward, with it goes a barbed wire of arcane energy that entangles foes. Afterward, further attacks drive the barbs into those foes.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Force, Weapon
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within weapon range
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier force damage, and attacks against the target gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls until the end of your next turn.

Shielding Cube — Artificer Attack 1

You launch a miniscule cube covered in runes into the fray. The cube exudes an aura that bashes nearby foes and shields your allies.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Artifice, Force, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Requirement: You must be wielding a ranged weapon.
Effect: Your artifice lands in a square adjacent to an enemy within range. Until the end of your next turn, you and any ally adjacent to or occupying the same square as the artifice gain a +1 power bonus to AC. Make an attack.
Target: One creature adjacent to the artifice
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + Intelligence modifier force damage.

Level 1 Daily Spells

Lifetap — Artificer Attack 1

With your implement, you launch one infused dart at an ally and one at an adversary. The foe's dart transfers life force to your friend in a golden flash.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Intelligence modifier damage, and an ally within 10 squares of you gains 10 temporary hit points.
Miss: Half damage, and the ally gains 5 temporary hit points.

Caustic Rampart — Artificer Attack 1

You infuse energy into spilled liquid reagents, throwing up a defensive wall of acidic fumes.

Daily ✦ Acid, Arcane, Conjuration, Implement
Standard Action **Area** wall 5 within 10 squares
Effect: You conjure a wall that consists of contiguous squares filled with acid. It can be up to 5 squares long and up to 2 squares high. The wall lasts until the end of your next turn. Any creature that starts its turn in or adjacent to the wall takes 1d6 + Intelligence modifier acid damage. The wall is difficult terrain, and the wall's squares are lightly obscured.
Sustain Minor: The wall persists.

Level 2 Utility Spells

Restorative Infusion — Artificer Utility 2

You direct restorative compounds at a comrade, who can then breathe those agents toward another member of your party.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: You or one ally
Effect: The target gains 20 temporary hit points. As a minor action, the target can transfer any number of temporary hit points to an ally within 5 squares.

Arcane Springboard — Artificer Utility 2

Infusing a small square of prepared cloth with arcane energy, you create a bouncy surface that launches any who step on it in a desired direction.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Artifice
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: Your artifice lands in a square within range. You and any ally who enters the artifice's square can jump a number of squares equal to your Constitution modifier. The jump does not count against a character's speed. The effect lasts until the end of your next turn.
Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

Level 3 Encounter Spells

Altered Luck — Artificer Attack 3

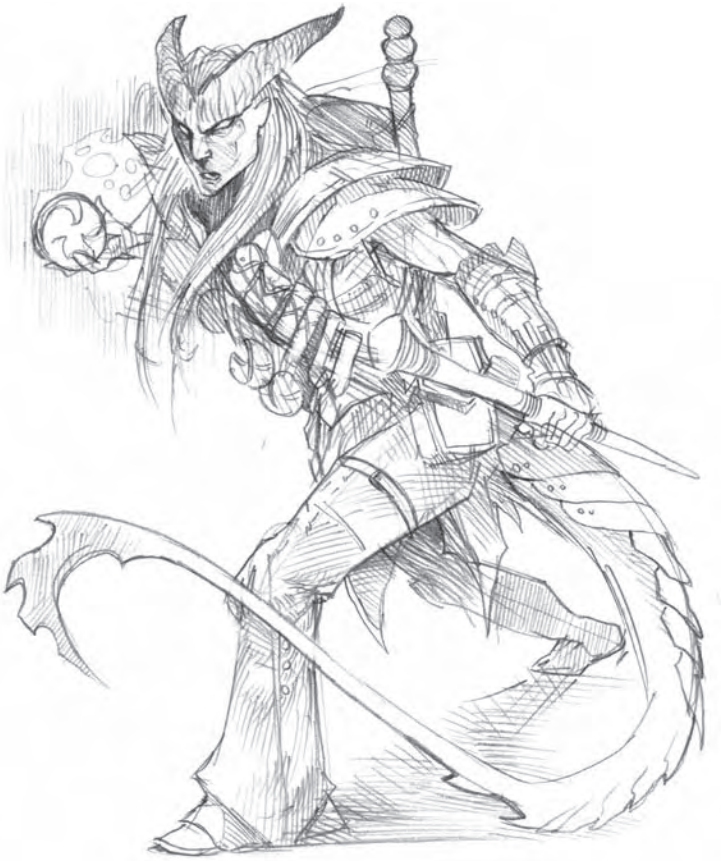
By channeling a specific pattern of energy into an ally's equipment, you alter the flow of fortune.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Will
Hit: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and savings throws until the end of your next turn.
Effect: One ally in the burst gains a +2 bonus to an attack roll, a skill check, an ability check, or a saving throw before the end of your next turn. The ally can use the bonus after determining the result of a roll.

Fiery Infusion — Artificer Attack 3

Sigils on your projectile glow as you infuse them. The missile generates a blazing matrix on impact, roasting your foes and igniting your allies' weapons with arcane fire.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Weapon
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within weapon range
Requirement: You must be wielding a ranged weapon.
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier fire damage.
Effect: Each ally in the burst deals 2 extra fire damage whenever he or she hits with a melee attack until the end of your next turn.



Level 5 Daily Spells

Predatory Shards — Artificer Attack 5

On impact, your rune-inscribed projectile creates a cloud of magical shards hostile to your enemies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Force, Weapon, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within weapon range
Requirement: You must be wielding a ranged weapon.
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone of magical shards that lasts until the end of the encounter. An enemy that starts its turn in the zone takes 5 force damage.

Dancing Weapon — Artificer Attack 5

Your weapon flies from your hand and harries one of your enemies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Artifice, Implement, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Effect: A melee weapon you are holding becomes an artifice, but reducing this artifice to 0 hit points only ends this effect, rather than destroying the weapon. The weapon enters a square in the target's space and makes an attack against the target. If the target moves, the weapon moves with it. If the target moves beyond the power's range or is killed, the effect ends. Otherwise, the effect lasts until the end of your next turn.
Attack: Intelligence + weapon's proficiency bonus vs. AC. Before you make the attack roll, choose whether to use the enhancement bonus, critical dice, and properties of your weapon or your implement for the damage roll.
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier damage.
Sustain Minor: When you sustain the power, repeat the attack.

Level 6 Utility Spells

Regeneration Infusion — Artificer Utility 6

You tie an ally's equipment to a steady flow of arcane energy, which restores your friend's vigor.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Healing
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: You if you're bloodied or one bloodied ally
Effect: The target gains regeneration 2 until the end of your next turn.
Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

Phantom Structure — Artificer Utility 6

By arranging small objects in your hand, you create an ephemeral structure made of magical force.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Conjuration
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Effect: You conjure a bridge, a staircase, or a ladder (see below) that appears in a space within range. The effect lasts until the end of your next turn.
Bridge: The bridge is 2 squares wide and a number of squares long equal to twice your Constitution modifier.
Spiral Staircase: The staircase occupies a space 2 squares on a side and is a number of squares tall equal to twice your Constitution modifier. The stairs are 1 square wide.
Straight Staircase: The staircase's base occupies 1 square, and the staircase rises 1 square vertically for each square it has in length. It is a number of squares long equal to twice your Constitution modifier.
Ladder: The ladder occupies 1 square and is a number of squares tall equal to twice your Constitution modifier.
Sustain Minor: The structure or object persists.

Level 7 Encounter Spells

Gale-Force Infusion — Artificer Attack 7

You charge an ally's armor with potential that erupts like a vicious blast of wind that churns the air for a moment.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst centered on one ally
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + Intelligence modifier damage, and you slide the target 2 squares.
Effect: The ally gains a +4 power bonus to AC against ranged attacks until the end of your next turn.

Runic Resistance — Artificer Attack 7

Using your implement, you hurl sigil-scribed ceramic sphere that blasts your foes and covers your allies in protective veils.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement; Acid, Cold, Fire, or Lightning
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + Intelligence modifier damage of a type you choose: acid, cold, fire, or lightning.
Effect: Each ally in the burst chooses a damage type—acid, cold, fire, or lightning—and gains resistance equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier against that damage type until the end of your next turn.

Level 9 Daily Spells

Lightning Motes — Artificer Attack 9

Channeling arcane energy into receptive ferrous dust, you create lightning that you then spread on your foes.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Intelligence modifier lightning damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Each time the target fails the saving throw, it takes 5 lightning damage.
Aftereffect: Ongoing 5 lightning damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 5 lightning damage (save ends).

Brittleskin Infusion Artificer Attack 9

Your rune-scribed projectile calcifies flesh and causes your foe to falter.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier damage, and the target is slowed and gains vulnerable 5 to melee attacks (save ends both).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Level 10 Utility Spells

Healing Figurine Artificer Utility 10

You imbue a small model of a robust figure with your own life force, causing it to emit a golden aura.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Artifice, Healing
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: You spend a healing surge while creating the artifice, but you regain no hit points for doing so. Your artifice lands in a square within range. The artifice has hit points equal to twice your healing surge value. As a minor action, you or any ally adjacent to or occupying the same space as the artifice can remove a number of hit points from the artifice to regain the same number of hit points. The effect lasts until the artifice's hit points are depleted or until the end of the encounter.

Slick Concoction Artificer Utility 10

You direct magic-infused liquid under an ally's boots, causing her to slip suddenly forward.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Move Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One ally
Effect: You slide the target 5 squares.

Level 13 Encounter Spells

Barbed Automaton Artificer Attack 13

You hurl a small knot of inscribed barbed wire, which grows and springs to life, attacking your foes.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Artifice, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: Your artifice lands in a square within range. The artifice occupies a square and counts as an ally for the purpose of flanking. The artifice makes an attack against an enemy that begins its turn adjacent to the artifice or enters a square adjacent to it. The effect lasts until the end of your next turn.
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Intelligence modifier damage.

Forceful Missile Artificer Attack 13

You infuse a rune-inscribed projectile with magic, making it deliver an impact that belies its size.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.

Level 15 Daily Spells

Lightning Matrix Artificer Attack 15

Pouring arcane power into your armor, you create a crackling pattern that lashes at your foes with tendrils of electricity.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Intelligence modifier lightning damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, any enemy that begins its turn adjacent to you takes 5 lightning damage and is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Hornet Shot Artificer Attack 15

Your weapon buzzes with toxic energy as you infuse it with magic. When it strikes your target, the weapon emits a cloud of hornet-like motes that sting your foe and nearby enemies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Poison, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage and grants combat advantage to you and your allies (save ends both).
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, an enemy that begins its turn adjacent to the target takes 5 poison damage.

Level 16 Utility Spells

Good Luck Charm — Artificer Utility 16

You infuse a small object with luck-altering energy.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Artifice
Short Rest **Personal**
Effect: You create an artifice that can be held. As a minor action, a creature holding the artifice can use it to gain a +5 bonus to its next saving throw or skill check. The effect lasts until it is used or until the end of your next extended rest.

Ironhide Infusion — Artificer Utility 16

You crush a bit of hard material in your hand, infusing it with protective magic. Then you use your implement to direct the dust onto an ally's armor.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Ranged** 10
Target: You or one ally
Effect: The target gains a +4 bonus to AC until the end of your next turn.

Level 17 Encounter Spells

Skipping Shot — Artificer Attack 17

Infusing a projectile with volatile energy, you send the weapon ricocheting among opponents.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Force, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier force damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Make a secondary attack.
Secondary Targets: One or two creatures other than the primary target (the primary target can be a secondary target if the primary attack missed)
Secondary Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier force damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Earth's Embrace — Artificer Attack 17

You transpose a glowing rune of force onto an ally's armor and send him skating across the ground, crashing into nearby foes.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Force, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One ally
Effect: You slide the primary target 3 squares and then make an attack.
Secondary Target: Each enemy adjacent to the primary target
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Intelligence modifier force damage. You slide the secondary target 1 square, and it is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Level 19 Daily Spells

Strangling Rope — Artificer Attack 19

Weaving magic into a prepared rope, you transform it into a whirling, grasping artifice.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Artifice, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + Intelligence modifier damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Each square within the area counts as a separate artifice. Destroying the artifice in one square removes the artifice from only that square. Enemies treat the area as difficult terrain, and an enemy that enters or begins its turn in the area is slowed until the end of its next turn. The effect lasts until the end of your next turn.

Burrowing Projectile — Artificer Attack 19

When your magic-infused shot strikes a foe, the projectile spins like a top, burrowing into the creature and leaving it vulnerable to attacks.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Intelligence modifier damage, and the target grants combat advantage to you and your allies and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both). If the target is killed before ongoing damage from this power ends, the closest enemy within 5 squares of the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Aftereffect: Ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target grants combat advantage to you and your allies (save ends).

Level 22 Utility Spells

Hero's Elixir — Artificer Utility 22

Using your own life force, you transmute a small vial of water into a potent healing draft.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Artifice, Healing
Short Rest **Personal**
Effect: You spend a healing surge to create a healing draft, instead of regaining hit points. A character can take a minor action to consume the artifice to regain hit points equal to twice your healing surge value. In addition, the character can make a saving throw against each effect that a save can end. The artifice lasts until consumed or until your next extended rest.

Four-Winds Bag — Artificer Utility 22

You mix reagents to create a windstorm within a small cloth bag, and then you unleash the winds to move you and your allies.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Targets: You and each ally in burst
Effect: You slide each target 3 squares.

Level 23 Encounter Spells

Armor of Acid — Artificer Attack 23

You direct prepared liquid onto an ally's armor, which takes on a green cast and emits noxious fumes.

Encounter ✦ Acid, Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst centered on one ally
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + Intelligence modifier acid damage
Effect: The ally gains resist 15 acid. Until the end of your next turn, any creature that makes a melee attack against the ally takes 5 acid damage.

Prismatic Shot — Artificer Attack 23

You activate runes on your weapon, causing it to emit multicolored light as it zooms toward your foe.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Cold, Poison, Psychic, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier poison damage, and the target is blinded until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Make a secondary attack against the target.
Secondary Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Make a tertiary attack against the target.
Tertiary Attack: Intelligence vs. Will
Hit: 1[W] + Intelligence modifier psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Level 25 Daily Spells

Trio of Biting Blades — Artificer Attack 25

The three rune-inscribed blades you fling at your opponent surround the creature and bite deep when it attacks or moves.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + Intelligence modifier damage, and the target takes 10 damage if it moves or attacks on its turn (save ends).
Aftereffect: The target takes 5 damage if it moves or attacks on its turn (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target takes 5 damage if it moves or attacks on its turn (save ends).

All-Consuming Missile — Artificer Attack 25

Your sigil-inscribed projectile ignites and engulfs your foe in hungry flames.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Fire, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Intelligence modifier fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage and is blinded (save ends both). If the target fails its first saving throw against this power, the ongoing fire damage increases to 15 damage. If the target fails its second saving throw against this power, the ongoing fire damage increases to 20 damage.
Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Level 27 Encounter Spells

Grave-Dust Cloud — Artificer Attack 27

You direct a bag of ash at your foes, which explodes in a pale cloud that saps their life and transfers it to your allies.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Healing, Implement, Necrotic
Standard Action **Area** burst 3 within 20 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Intelligence modifier necrotic damage. Each ally in the burst regains hit points equal to half the damage and gains a +1 power bonus to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Living Caltrop Swarm — Artificer Attack 27

You direct a handful of spiked orbs across an area. After stinging your foes, the caltrops explode.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Intelligence + 2 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + Intelligence modifier damage.
Effect: Enemies in the area grant combat advantage. At the end of your next turn, each creature in the area takes 2d10 + Constitution modifier fire damage, and the effect ends.

Artificers learn to channel magic into items by using complex chains of sigils and diagrams or by using magical materials. With their skills, they can assemble the perfect magical object for any situation.

Level 29 Daily Spells

Bitterfrost Bolt Artificer Attack 29

The sigils etched onto your weapon steam with bitter cold. On impact, the missile releases its wintery potential, transmuting your enemy into an ice-covered form.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Cold, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 3[W] + Intelligence modifier cold damage, and the target is immobilized and takes vulnerable 10 to all damage (save ends both).
Aftereffect: The target is slowed and takes vulnerable 5 to all damage (save ends both).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed and takes vulnerable 5 to all damage (save ends both).

Sigils of Shadow Tendrils Artificer Attack 29

Tracing a magic pattern in the air with your implement, you cause baleful, violet runes to appear on an ally's armor. Tentacles of darkness erupt from the pattern and attack nearby enemies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst centered on one ally
Attack: Intelligence vs. Will
Hit: 4d6 + Intelligence modifier damage, and the target is blinded and slowed (save ends both). Whenever the target fails its saving throw against this power, you can slide it 1 square.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, any creature that attacks the ally is blinded until the end of your next turn.

Magic Items

If there's one thing that sets artificers apart from other spellcasters, it's the way they use magic items. The items below include a few sample items that an artificer is likely to pick up in his or her adventuring career.

Rod of Deadly Casting Level 2+

Infused with war magic and covered in death symbols, this rod amplifies lethal magical strikes.

Lvl 2	+1	520 gp	Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp
Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp

Implement (Rod)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d10 damage per plus. If you roll a 10, you can roll the die again and add the result.

Rod of Runic Resistance Level 2+

The elemental runes on this thick baton mark it as an artificer's implement. It augments spells that protect against energy.

Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp			

Implement (Rod)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: Affects artificers only. Resistance granted by your artificer powers that lasts until the end of your next turn instead lasts an extra round (until the end of your turn on the subsequent round).
Power (Daily): Minor Action. Area burst 1 within 10 squares. You and each ally in the burst chooses a damage type—acid, cold, fire, or lightning—and gains resist equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier against that damage type until the end of your next turn.

Ingot Liberatis Level 19+

An entwining runic pattern covers this heavy metal bar, which aids in freeing your allies from adverse effects.

Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp
Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp			

Implement (Rod)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Encounter): Free action. Use this power when you hit with an attack using this rod. An ally within 10 squares of you can make a saving throw against an effect that a save can end. If the effect has the charm, fear, or polymorph keywords, the ally gains a +2 bonus to the saving throw.

Stonemeld Armor — Level 8+

The stony surface of this sigil-covered armor can harden to briefly absorb the brunt of attacks.

Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp			

Armor: Cloth, Leather
Enhancement: AC

Power (Daily): Minor action. You gain resist 5 to all damage until the end of your next turn. When you use this power, you can expend one of your arcane encounter or daily powers to increase the resistance by 5.
Level 23 or 28: You gain resist 10 to all damage.

Reparation Apparatus — Level 6

This gauntlet-like contraption enhances your ability repair constructs.

Item Slot: Hands 1,800 gp
Property: When you use a healing power on a construct, that creature regains an additional 2d6 hit points. When you use a power to grant temporary hit points to a construct, that creature gains an additional 2d6 temporary hit points.

Cannith Goggles — Level 1

These goggles enhance your vision and can be empowered by magic to improve your vision even more.

Item Slot: Head 360 gp
Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Perception checks.
Power (Daily): Minor action. Expend an arcane encounter or daily power to use this power. You gain darkvision until the end of the encounter or for 5 minutes if you expended an encounter power or until the end of your next extended rest if you expended a daily power.

About the Authors

Logan Bonner traded the Great Plains of Kansas for Seattle when he landed a job at Wizards of the Coast. As a mechanical designer, he has worked on *Dungeon Tiles*, D&D Miniatures, *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, and *Adventurer's Vault*.

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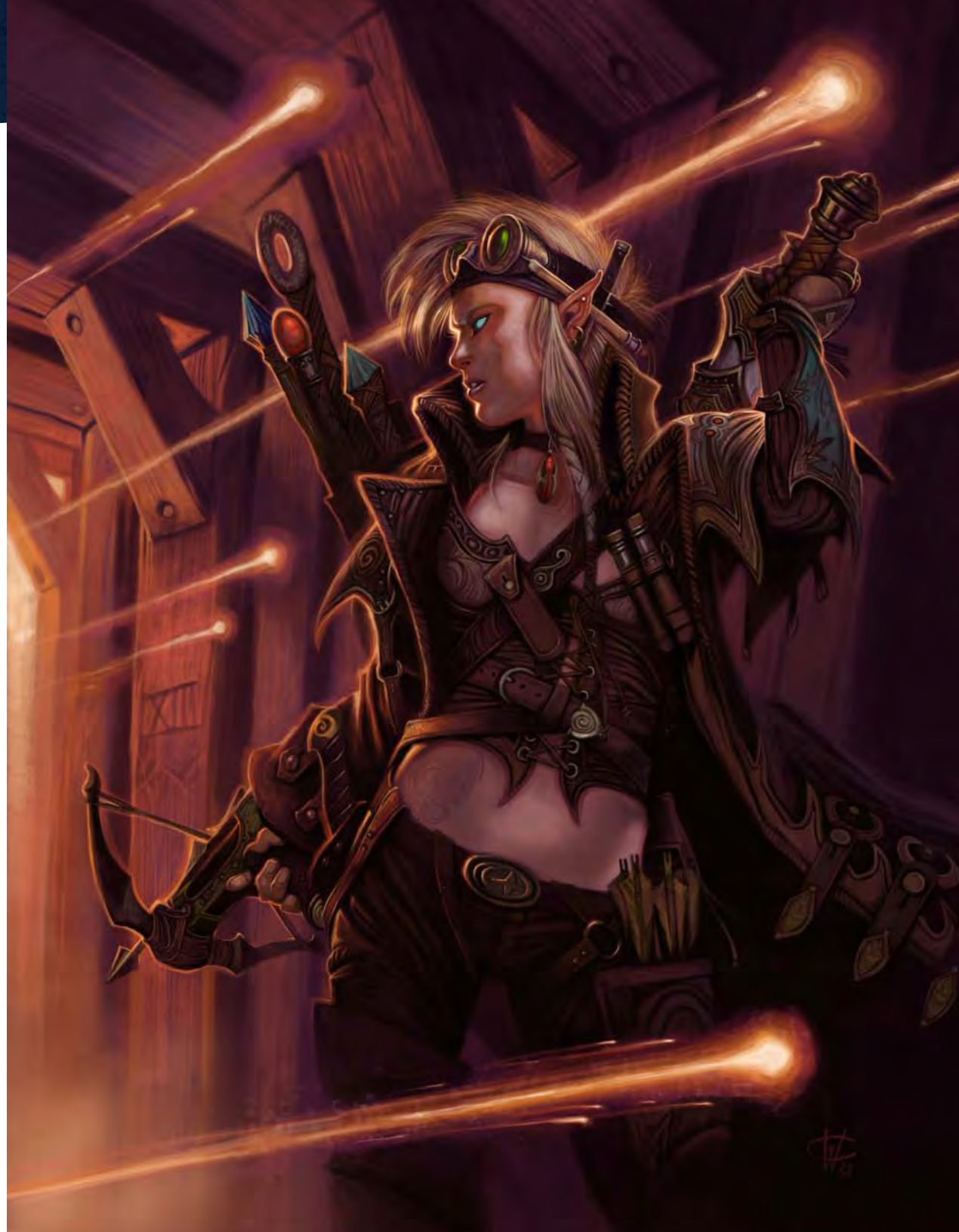

by Brian R. James

CORMYR

illustrations by Randy Gallegos ✦ cartography by Mike Schley

THE KINGDOM OF CORMYR (Core-MEER) is old, yet strong and vigorous. This civilized land carved itself out of a wilder territory through grit, bravery, and determination. Though the land has a reputation of goodly rule, sometimes Cormyr has had to make difficult choices to ensure its security. Its most contested border is along shadowy Netheril and gluttonous Sembia, though Cormyr also borders the hazardous Stonelands, the Tunlands, and the Stormhorns and Thunderpeaks.

Dominated by humankind, the Land of the Purple Dragon has been ruled by House Obarskyr for over fourteen centuries, with the strong backing of an army of heavily armored knights on Cormyrian destriers and magically potent warmages.

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A mystical connection exists between the land and the people and creatures that inhabit it, which is little understood but demonstrably real and powerful.

Geography

The Forest Country, as Cormyr is sometimes called, lies cradled between the nations of Netheril on the north and Sembia to the east. To the west, beyond the Sunset Mountains, Cormyr is bordered by Elturgard. The southern border now stretches beyond the Dragonmere to the Giant's Run Mountains. The largest city and royal capital of the kingdom is Suzail, named after Suzara Obarskyr, mother of the first king of Cormyr.

Agriculture is the underlying strength of the kingdom. Cormyr was once heavily forested, but generations of clearing and farming has reduced the woodlands to the King's Forest, Hermit's Wood, and Hullack Forest. A small community in the King's Forest called Dhedluk (population 1,000) is home to farmers and woodcarvers. The wet, temperate climate creates rich green forests and healthy fields of grain.

Cormyr has several rivers, both large and small. The most significant waterway is the Starwater, which runs from the Stormhorn Mountains through the King's Forest and into the Dragonmere at Marsember (population 38,000)

The Dragonmere (also called the Lake of Dragons) offers Cormyr's coastal cities access to the Sea of Fallen Stars. Fog is common along the seacoast and in major ports including Suzail, Marsember, and Teziir (population 23,000).

The Wyvernwater is an inland lake shaped something like a malformed starfish. Four major rivers—two of which are the Immerflow and the Wyvernflow—empty into this lake. Small communities are found on the lake's shores, including Immersea (population 1,200), Yeoman Bridge (population 400), and Sunset Hill (population 900).

The central mountain range of the region is the Stormhorns. These stormswept peaks cut off the main population centers of Cormyr from the wilderness lands beyond.

Cormyr frontier includes the wetlands of the Farsea Swamp and High Moors, and the desolate Stonelands. Though Cormyr claims these territories, travel to and from the back country is difficult and perilous, which results in few Cormyrians living there.

SUZAIL

The royal capital and richest city in Cormyr, Suzail is home to the important nobles and merchant houses of the country. The center of the city is the Royal Palace, which is surrounded by gardens and the buildings of the Royal Court.

Population: 55,000.

Government: His Royal Highness King Foril Obarskyr keeps his residence in the Palace. Edwin Morahan, a male human paladin, is Lord Magister of the City, and commander of the city's garrison of Purple Dragons. Edwin's herald is Lady Eleanor Thond.

Defense: The Purple Dragons and War Wizards jointly hold an impressive fortresslike barracks in Suzail. Both are constantly seen drilling in the courtyard, using swords, spells, and interesting tactics to quell imagined threats. The city also maintains the new royal shipyards, including the Imperial Navy that once docked in Marsember. Marsember took longer to recover from the lowering of the Dragonmere, and the navy never returned to its longtime moorage.

Inns: The Myrmidon. Other inns are available, but this one is known best.

Taverns: Witch-Duke's Bride. Among the many taverns of Suzail, the Witch-Duke's Bride is a favorite.

Supplies: Society of Stalwart Adventurers. Other sources of supplies (or research materials in the case of the Society of Stalwart Adventurers) are available but are too numerous to mention here.

Temples: Towers of Good Fortune (Tymora); Silent Room (Oghma).

The Ruling Class

Cormyr has a reputation among other nations of Faerûn as being rather snobbish. This perception is derived from the noble class, who feel they are better than those "below" them. However, the origin of this feeling has less to do with birth and divine right than with the responsibility of the station and its importance in Cormyrian society.

The Royal Family

Cormyr is a hereditary monarchy; the reigning monarch is King Foril Obarskyr. Son of Azoun V and Nalara Marliir, the future king was born in the Year of True Omens (1409 DR). He was named in honor of his great-grandfather's only son, who was assassinated by Fire Knives at the age of 2.

In his late adolescence Foril trained with the Purple Dragons, but later chose more academic pursuits under the tutelage of the War Wizards. Free from the heavy responsibilities placed on his older brother Emvar, Foril's passionate study of warfare and diplomacy eventually led the prince to Tethyr, where he apprenticed under the Red Fellowship.

During this period, Foril fell deeply in love with Jemra Rhindaun, niece to Queen Sybille of Tethyr. After a whirlwind engagement, they wed in the Year of the Stalking Horrors (1430 DR)—but this didn't sit well with the Cormyrian nobility at all. Jemra birthed a healthy baby boy, Irvel Obarskyr, a year later.

In the Year of the Silent Flute (1437 DR), Crown Prince Emvar died in an ambush by Sembian forces south of the Vast Swamp. In the same month, Jemra was killed in a failed assassination attempt on the king. Waves of mourning and calls for decisive action against Netheril and Sembia swept Cormyr.

It was soon discovered that before his death, Emvar fathered a son, Erzoured, with a merchant's daughter named Solatha. Solatha was named Countess of Dhedluk, after her birthplace, to ensure that Erzoured would have a title to inherit despite his

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Rasilith
Orlath Wood
Moander's Footstep
Hunter's Hills
Tower Hlithal
Stonewoods
Mount Rausrawna
Castle Nacacia
Tilver's Gap
Moonsea Ride
Sembertholme
Twin Peaks of Urlspur
Falls of Tumbling Stars
Tower Tranquil
Ruins of Amazandar
Griffon Hill
Tilverton Scar
Teerac
Lundeth
Thandril
Gwarch
Halfhap
Tower of Ruin
Gnoll Pass
The Stonelands
Well of Dragons
Sunset Foothills
Skullwatch
Ladydove
Skull Gorge
River Reaching
Yellow Snake Pass
Abandoned Keep
Temple Acheron
Castle Crag
Slingdyke
Immerflow
Elfmound
Realm of the Wailing Fog
Thunder Gap
Thunder Peaks
Hullack Forest
The High Moors
Eastern Stormhorns
The Helmlands
The Redwoods
Tempest Valley
Forgotten Keep
Redspring
Hillmarch
Masoner's Bridge
Sunset Mountains
Aris
The Tunnash
The Warm Waterfall
The Haunted Halls
Eagle Peak
High Horn
Tyrluk
Eveningstar
High Road
East Way
Arabel
Sunset Hill
Thunderholme
Thunderflow
Darkhold
Wyrmhall
Swampgate
Nyka's Rest
Collinwood
Bospir
Sword River
Inner Trail
Hultail
Thunderstone
Highcastle
Corm Orp
Farsea Swamp
Plungepool
Espar
Knightswood
Yeoman Bridge
Wyvernwater
Besert
Hidden Vale
Dhedluk
Starwater Road
Aunkspear
Junirill
Thunder Way
Ghars
Infested Hills
Threetrees
Waymoot
Ranger's Way
Stagsteads
Mouth O' Gargoyles
Immersea
Golden Ruins
Orvaskyte Keep
Vast Swamp
Fens of Tun
Swords Hollow
The Reaching Woods
The Far Hills
Hilp
Gladehap
Blister Trail
Wyvernflow
Skull Crag
Minroe
Gray Oaks
King's Forest
Way of the Dragon
Calantar's Bridge
Kallamarn
Nesmyth
Ongul's Water
Wheloon
Tomb of Chonis
Darkflow
Hluthvar
Maloren's Rest
Old Axe
Bogbrook
Hermit's Woods
Lost Refuge
Way of the Manticore
Sunset Vale
The Tunlands
Sunset Mountains
The Stormhorns
Marsember
Blustich
Dreamer's Rock
Azoun's Hold
Suzail
Moonever
Battlerise
Daerlun
Dragoneye Way
Bluemist Trail
Monksblade
Mage Keep
Smuggler's Stone
Kirinwood
Nalufaen
Wormtower
Greatgaunt
Tann River
High Road
Telvanlu
Dawngleam
The Neck
Accardi
Asbravn
Bridge of Fallen Men
Valkur's Roar
Fort Helm
Dragonmere
Corsuor
The Monolith
Proskur
The Skeleton Shore
Westgate
Cliffs of Karthaut
Gritstone Moorland
Haunted Ilipur
Bloodtower
Overmoor Trail
Uldoon Trail
Dusk Road
Chiomhar Tributary
Iriaebor
Castaway Coast
Reddansyr
Redwater
River Thurn
Grand Ride
Fendarl's Gate
Rupert's Way
The Lightning Steppes
The Plunge
Turnstone Road
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illegitimate birth. With his mother, Erzoured moved to the Palace where he was raised beside Irvel as a brother.

Today Crown Prince Irvel Obarskyr is well respected among both commoners and the nobility. He shows a lot of the old Azoun IV boldness that could portend interesting times for the country. With his wife Ospra Goldfeather he has two children: son Baerovus born in 1454 DR and daughter Raedra born in 1460 DR.

Irvel's cousin Erzoured Obarskyr, however, is secretly a black-hearted schemer who wants the throne so bad he can taste it. He harbors plans of doing away with Irvel so he can be named crown prince.

At seventy years of age, King Foril rules from the Palace of the Purple Dragon in Suzail, taking counsel from the Royal Wizard. Foril is a respected strategist, statesman, and administrator. Today he leaves the fighting to others, because he is smart enough to understand that he's too important to his country to act recklessly. The king has ruled for 30 years and there is a sense among the nobility that Foril might be reaching the end of his reign.

The Nobility

About two dozen major noble families of note exist along with a fluctuating number of minor, dwindling, and less-known houses. Many houses lost a great portion of their numbers—and some were wiped out entirely—during the Spellplague and the chaos and conflicts with Netheril that followed. A few of the prominent noble families include Houses Alsevir, Cormaeril, Crownsilver, Dauntinghorn, Emmarask, Goldfeather, and Hawklin.

All the Mages Royal have taken great pains to structure the laws of Cormyr, with full support from the heralds, to make it bluntly and explicitly clear that all nobles hold their lands and titles "at the favor of" the Crown. House Bleth was forever banished from Cormyr following the Abraxus Affair in 1369 DR. The Cormaeril family, also implicated in that incident, similarly lost lands and titles but was permitted to remain in-country. Those Cormaerils who remained loyal were restored their nobility late in Azoun V's reign.

House Cormaeril

House Cormaeril is a good choice for an adventurer who wishes to be from "good blood" and noble station. Even family historians are unsure of the number of possible heirs, sinister branches, and illegitimate young in the family tree.

Lords and Heralds

Nobles are born, not made. The exceptions to this are local lords and heralds, who are individuals appointed by the king to govern a town or group of towns in the king's name. Upon selecting a local lord, the king grants that person a noble title (if she or he does not already hold one).

Each lord defends the local farms, dispenses the King's justice, keeps the peace, serves as "the King's eyes and ears," and collects tithes for the king and for him or herself. Each lord or lady must have someone who serves as a clerk/record-keeper and is a trained herald.

The relationship between the landed nobility and the appointed local lords is good, though many established families treat local servants of the crown as no more than royal lackeys to be bossed about or flattered as need be.

The Military

Foril's personal standard is a purple dragon on a black field. The king recently carried the ensign of the Purple Dragon, which can be borne only by a blood Obarskyr, into battle in the Year of Darkenbeasts Risen (1442 DR). Today, Foril's son Irvel commands the nation's armed forces. The crown prince doesn't have the title of Lord High Marshal of the Realm, but does have all the responsibilities of the post.

Purple Dragons

To enforce the royal word, Cormyr maintains a large standing army called the Purple Dragons. The force is named in memory of the adventuring band of the same name formed by Crown Prince Duar Obarskyr (thanks to legends of the dragon Thauglor) centuries past.

Rank in the Purple Dragons from junior to most senior is as follows: Blade, Telsword, First Sword, Swordcaptain, Lionar, Ornrion, Constal, Oversword, Battlemaster, and Lord High Marshal. The Highknights are a handful of loyal, dedicated, dangerous Purple Dragons who serve the royal family as personal enforcers, spies, and envoys.

The Purple Dragons possess no official uniform, though all soldiers are expected to meet certain expectations.

- Each company has its own badge, representing the name or purpose of the company. In the rare event that a company has no official name or stated purpose (due to its direct service to a noble, in times of crisis or war, or when the company is garrisoned locally), the badge takes the form of a silver, shield-shaped brooch etched with the Purple Dragon.
- Tabards can be worn over armor (or "warcoats"), but only in white, and then only with the Purple Dragon properly emblazoned on its front. Other colors are used by the personal bodyguards of the various nobles. Black tabards are never worn, even by Knights Royal.

Purple Dragon Commander's Ring Level 13

This silver ring is engraved with the Purple Dragon signet of the Obarskyr royal family.

Item Slot: Ring **Price:** 17,000 gp

Power (Daily ✦ Arcane): Standard Action. *Detect Magic and Poison:* Activated by command word (usually inscribed on the inside of the ring, and typically *"Bonthar"*. When the power is activated and the ring touched to food or drink, it glows with an eerie gold-green if the substance is poisonous and bright blue if it is enchanted (including potions), although the ring cannot identify what sort of poison or magic is present.

Power (Daily ✦ Arcane): Immediate Interrupt. You can use this power when you fall. You take no damage from the fall, regardless of its distance, and you do not fall prone at the end of the fall.

Lore (Arcana DC 15): These rings are normally found only in the hands of the Purple Dragons of Cormyr (of Ornrion rank or higher), the royal family of that nation, or by individuals performing special missions on behalf of the crown. The Purple Dragons use them to protect the royal family from assassination attempts by poison, and also to verify that merchants claiming the sale of magic potions are not being fraudulent.

Imperial Navy

The two score ships of the navy of Cormyr—known colloquially as the Blue Dragons—sails often out of Suzail, Teziir, and Palagarr (on the isle of Prespur) to patrol the Lake of Dragons, the Neck, and the waterways that lead into Cormyr's domain. The Warden of the Port in Teziir, Duke Penfold Dauntinghorn, is considered the high commander of these forces, though he officially commands only the fifteen ships that dock in his home port.

All Cormyr's warships are named after one of Cormyr's past monarchs, such as Queen Gantharla. The sole exception is the *Steel Princess*, an ironclad named for Alusair Nacacia, who ruled Cormyr as regent during Azoun V's youth.

The Blue Dragons have only three true ranks. The captain of a ship is its absolute lord and master, operating with impunity in any fashion except that which violates the ship's standing orders. His lieutenant sees to the day-to-day operations on board the ship, including supply, rationing, and other sundry details. Every other Blue Dragon is a sailor with a specific role to perform (purser, yeoman, sailing master, boatswain, master-at-arms, and so on).

When the Alliance of Freesailors was formally disbanded in the Year of Lost Ships (1400 DR), ranks in the Imperial Navy swelled.

War Wizards

From the founding of the kingdom, mages have been important to Cormyr in warfare as well as other matters. Mages loyal to the crown sign an agreement with the king and make a secret oath, thus becoming War Wizards. These wizards are an integral component of Cormyr's military, and they are respected and feared across the land.

As their leader, Ganrahast is both Royal Magician and Chairman of the College of War Wizards. The War Wizards have no internal rank or structure of note. There is only Ganrahast, his second, Vainrence, and everyone else. Vainrence is more war-minded than the Mage Royal, and he is pushing for the militarization of the College of War Wizards and the pressing of the Brotherhood into a more cohesive unit rather than an ever-shifting alliance of mages. Today the old guard of War Wizards now includes powerful swordmages, warlocks, and other spellcasters even the Netherese respect. Only Ganrahast knows the true numbers of the organization.

The Spellplague, royal sentiment, and intricately worded portions of the Suzail Writ have conspired to greatly limit the ability of War Wizards to magically monitor the thoughts and intentions of Cormyr's citizenry. After a number of attempts resulted in the messy deaths of nobles and drooling feebleminded-ness of the wizards involved, the Crown has banned the mind-reaming of any citizen of Cormyr, with the act punishable by death. The War Wizards still try to spy on everyone (even themselves, by mean of the alarphons, War Wizards who act as an internal police force), but today their methods are less invasive, and in truth, less effective.

Common Folk

Near the end of his reign, Azoun V signed the Suzail Writ, in which the King agreed to be bound by law, and which gave "free citizens" inviolable rights; notably trial by jury of peers. The Writ restricted the nobility and elevated the common folk. Most nobles have accepted the new status quo, but a few still scheme to gain enough influence over the throne (or gain the throne itself) so that they could then return the noble houses to their "rightful prominence." King Foril remains a staunch defender of the Writ.

Farmers

Farming is the largest occupation in Cormyr and the foundation of the Forest Country's conservative and civilized society. A typical farmer lives a simple life, farming the land quite a distance from any town of size. Farmers are extremely loyal to King Foril and readily volunteer to join the Purple Dragons in times of emergency, as was the case in recent conflicts against Netheril and Sembia.

Cormyr's monarchy has never permitted serfdom. No farmer is anything but a free citizen or hired "crofter" working and living on lands owned by another and paying rent to the owner in the form of either coin or a portion of the crop yields. Landless farmers are in no way bound to the fields they work and are free to move on after a term or harvest season is complete.

In upland Cormyr, crofters are the norm. Except in strips of land fronting along all major roads and in the most remote locales, almost all the tilled land is

owned by one wealthy family or another. In "downland" Cormyr (roughly: south of Immersea and Waymoot), wealthy families might own large numbers of farms, but their properties are among the smallholds of independent Cormyrian citizens ("free citizens").

Farmland is by no means monopolized by nobles or rich folk, however. If lands are fallow, anyone can walk up, till the land, and, if they are there for a sufficient number of seasons, gain clear title. Local lords do however have the power to commandeer portions of local crop yields from the farms under the local lord's protection (and in some cases "yeomen warriors" from among the farmhands) when the rare need arises.

Coinage and Currency

A coin's value is expressed firmly in the weight of the precious metal used. In Cormyr, coppers are called thumbs, silvers are falcons, gold are lions, and platinum coins are tricrowns

Cormyrian coins bear the visage and name of King Foril on the face, and a date, denomination, and mint mark on the obverse. The mint mark designates either a Suzail (a great three-decker, four-masted carrack) or High Horn (two parallel crescent moons, horns to the dexter) minting. Cormyrian coins are of pure metal and heavy weight, and they age well.

Crafters

Cormyr has a long reputation of crafters, who are respected for being gifted by the gods with talents to transform worldly materials into products that are useful or decorative (or both, in the finest cases).

Several towns in Cormyr are centers for particular types of crafts. Surprisingly for such a damp place, the Wyrund family out of Mouth o' Gargoyles (population 800) is famed for its exquisite cabinetry and woodcarving. The community of Gladehap (population 1,100) is a refuge for silversmiths. Minroe (population 500) is the absolutely best place in the kingdom to find affordable, high-quality jewelers and gemsmiths.

Each town usually has at least one crafters guild, which looks after the interests of their members by combating taxes and trying to improve working conditions, supplies, and sales opportunities. Unlike in some countries, these guilds are not particularly powerful; they more closely resemble benevolent fraternal organizations and not political entities. The concept of a "labor union" is unknown in Cormyr.

Merchants

The most powerful class outside the nobility, merchants exert considerable influence, which grows steadily.

Cormyr's contact with other nations of Faerûn is primarily due to the activity and influence of wealthy merchant houses. The most powerful of these organizations include the Seven Suns Trading Coster, the Trueshield Trading Priakos, the trading families of Skatterhawk, and Glanend.

King Foril vigorously eradicates all attempts to form thieves' guilds and smuggling cabals in the nation's largest cities. The presence of Cormyte merchant ships on the Dragonmere once escalated the amount of pirate activity there, but this has largely ended since the expansion of the Imperial Navy. Blue Dragon flotillas commonly escort merchant ships back and forth to the Neck.

Major imports to the Forest Kingdom include glass, ivory, perfume, and spices. Cormyr exports armor, ivory sculptures, cloth, coal, food, swords, and timber.

Adventuring Companies

By definition, adventurers are well armed and magically capable beings who are incredibly dangerous to their enemies . . . and not always healthy to be around, even for their friends.

Despite the possibilities for peril inherent in having adventurers around, most residents of Cormyr are well disposed toward adventurers of good heart. They know that adventurers live daily with risks they would never be willing to face themselves

Royal Charter

In Cormyr it's not just advisable to obtain a charter, it's the law. Cormyr has a keen interest in keeping close tabs on those who walk the countryside bearing arms and who seemingly have no higher purpose than to merely "seek adventure." The military history of Cormyr is one of guerilla ambushes and running skirmishes, rather than "setpiece" battles, and the Court is thus sensitive to the presence of armed folk within the kingdom. Adventurers or mercenaries cannot operate within Cormyr without permission of the King in the form of a royal charter. Without a charter, "Lawless freeswords" can be apprehended by any force representing the king, including the Purple Dragons and local militia. A charter can be obtained through the Lord Commander at High Horn, Rauolas Cormaeril; the Warden of the Eastern Marches in Castle Crag, Warvred Emmarask; or Crown Prince Irvel Obarskyr at the Royal Court in Suzail. Basic charters can be had for the annual cost of 25 gold pieces. Large mercenary companies may acquire a charter for 1,000 golden lions, with an annual tax of 300 golden lions. This prestigious gold-leaf foil document is hand-lettered and personally signed by King Foril himself.

Charters are customarily given to a "company of adventurers." Such a company cannot number more than thirty persons at any one time. All members of the chartered company must wear the arms or badge of their company at all times when armed in Cormyr.

Any changes in roster must be reported immediately to the offices of the aforementioned officers.

Peacebonds

Persons legally bearing weapons must wear peacestrings about their sword hilts (to prevent quick unsheathing). These strings are colored and tasseled cords, and it is an art to tie them in ornate knots. The best of such knots appear complicated, but can be undone with a single tug to free the weapon. If the Purple Dragons spot anyone bearing weapons that aren't peace-bonded, they stop such individuals and inform them of Cormyr's "custom." Persistent violators are imprisoned and their goods seized.

Society of Stalwart Adventurers

This elite club of explorers and adventurers is a members-only society based out of a luxurious manor house in Suzail. The mansion boasts many fireplaces and stuffed monsters' heads. Members have access to an extensive library of old adventurers' journals—both members' writings and other tomes aggressively purchased from all over Faerûn or copied from originals at Candlekeep. The last century has weeded out most of the pompous and arrogant members of the society, replacing them with those of true courage. Arguably, the society's most famous alumnus is Artus Cimber, discoverer of the *Ring of Winter*, a powerful relic from an earlier age.

Society

To blend in and gain acceptance among the citizenry of Cormyr, one must learn and follow common local customs:

- Commoners of both sexes bow their heads to royalty. Citizens enforce this law with visitors. Cormyrians greatly respect their leaders, and they want to impress this respect upon everyone who visits their kingdom.
- Burials are followed by wakes. Cormyrians view life and death as a pleasant journey from one wonderful kingdom to another. Various faiths have different burial practices, but most hold the belief that the deceased should be mourned by the living in festivities that remind everyone how fortunate they are to be a part of Cormyr.
- Young females interested in finding a mate wear purple scarves at the hip or around the throat (or both). Lovers also frequently give purple scarves as gifts.
- Guests always adhere to the rules of the household. Cormyrians believe the home is one of the most important places, and its maintenance is paramount to a family's continued happiness. Guests should not, therefore, do things that interfere with the host family's way of living.
- Hunting on another's land is forbidden. The population of game animals is sometimes scarce, and the crown closely regulates hunting, especially in the King's Forest.
- Husbands and wives sometimes publicly refer to each other as "My Lord" and "My Lady" (regardless of what real-world rank or title they have or lack) as a sign of reverence and love. It is also used as a sign of respect by servants, sworn bondsfolk, and other social inferiors when speaking to their lords and ladies.

History

Cormyr dates its years from the founding of House Obarskyr in the Year of Opening Doors (26 DR). For much of its existence, Cormyr was little more than the city-state of Suzail and a few fortified outposts. Today the kingdom stretches more than 400 miles across and is a major political and military power in the Heartlands.

The current king is 73rd in a long line of rulers.

Timeline of Recent Events

1371	**Year of the Unstrung Harp**
	Birth of Azoun V of Cormyr. Death of Azoun IV and Crown Princess Tanalasta Obarskyr. Beginning of the Steel Regency of Princess Alusair Nacacia.
1384	**Year of Three Streams Bloodied**
	At the insistence of several members of Court and the young king, Azoun V is crowned King of Cormyr.
1385	**Year of Blue Fire**
	The Spellplague begins with the murder of Mystra. Cormyr is struck hard, but not so violently as many other nations. Roughly one third of all Wizards of War are slain, driven mad, or go missing in the year following Mystra's death.
1390	**Year of the Walking Man**
	Death of the Dowager Dragon Queen, Filfaeril Selazair Obarskyr.
1409	**Year of True Omens**
	Birth of Foril Obarskyr, second son of Azoun V and Queen Nalara.
1439	**Year of the Silent Tear**
	Cormyr and Sembia wage a series of increasingly hot battles, which escalates into full-scale war.
1441	**Year of Resurrections Rampant**
	Treaty of Griffonfang Bridge: Pressured on all sides, Sembia (with approval from its Netherese governors) agree to a cessation of hostilities with Cormyr, the Dalelands, and Cormanthor. The uneasy cease-fire endures to this day. Daerlun and Urmlaspyr gain their independence from both nations.
1449	**Year of the Godly Invitation**
	Death of King Azoun V. Coronation of King Foril.
1479	**Year of the Ageless One**
	Present Day.

Draeven Marauder

"What care have I for your king or laws? Cormyr is my foe. I am a freebooter of the Coast. I am a Draeven marauder."

Prerequisite: Fighter class

You are a skulking freedom fighter resisting Cormyrean occupation of the Dragon Coast. With a short pike in hand you are a master skirmisher, and you strike quickly and savagely before retreating. In towns up and down the Coast, you are either heralded as an instrument of liberty or derided as a rebellious insurgent little better than a brigand or pirate.

Draeven Marauder Path Features

Fleet Skirmisher (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you can shift 3 squares before using that action.

Marauder Precision (11th level): You can score critical hits with spears on a roll of 19–20.

Press the Advantage (16th level): When you score a critical hit with a melee attack against a bloodied enemy, make a melee basic attack against a different target within reach as a free action.

Draeven Marauder Exploits

Impaling Strike Draeven Marauder Attack 11

You spring into action, expertly strike, and impale your foe on your short pike.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a spear (or short pike).
Special: Shift up to 3 squares before making the attack.
Target: One creature.
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Exultant Withdrawal Draeven Marauder Utility 12

Your enemy falls, and you strategically reposition yourself on the battlefield

Encounter ✦ Martial
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: One of your attacks drops an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer
Effect: You can shift 3 squares.

Taunting Press Draeven Marauder Attack 20

You adroitly outmaneuver your enemy, pushing and baiting him with every stride and strike.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** 1
Requirement: You must be wielding a spear (or short pike).
Target: One creature
Effect: Slide the target to any other square adjacent to you.
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, as long as you are adjacent to the target, you slide the target 1 square before making a melee attack against it.

Draeven Marauder Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Streetwise check.

DC 10: Many folk south of the Dragonmere still consider themselves Draeven (folk of the Dragon Coast) and not subjects of the Crown of Cormyr.

DC 15: The marauders have a signature weapon, a short pike.

DC 20: Competent fighters on both land and sea, Draeven marauders often sign up as privateers, ambushing and waylaying any vessel flying the Purple Dragon pennant.

DC 40: A lot of the financial backing behind the Draeven marauders is funneled to the freedom fighters through unnamed contacts in the city of Easting.

Luckbringer of Tymora

"I am a daughter of Lady Luck. I place myself in the hands of fate and embrace a willingness to take risks. Fortune favors the bold!"

Prerequisite: Cleric class, must worship Tymora

As a priest of the Lady Who Smiles you favor gaiety and spontaneity, and you believe that those who enjoy the greatest fortune are those who take the greatest risks. You are bold, for to be bold is to live.

Luckbringer Path Features

Divine Fortune (11th level): As a free action, when you or an ally within 5 squares who misses an attack roll, you can spend an action point to allow the target to reroll that attack with a +2 bonus.

Luck Blade (11th level): You are proficient with one heavy blade of your choice. Luckbringers wielding a *luck blade* can use the weapon as an implement for cleric powers.

Probability Control (16th level): Once per encounter, you can roll twice for any d20 roll and use the better result.

Luckbringer Prayers

Divine Tilt Luckbringer Attack 11

You channel the divine radiance of Lady Luck to protect you and your allies against enemy attacks, while bringing ill luck to your foes.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Target: All allies within burst
Effect: All allies within the burst gain a +5 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.
Secondary Targets: Each enemy in burst.
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: All enemies in the burst take a -5 penalty to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Luckbolt Luckbringer Utility 12

A silvery-blue radiance streaks away from the Luckbringer to surround a companion, imbuing the recipient with bountiful good fortune.

Daily ✦ Divine
Standard Action
Close burst 10
Target: You or one ally within the burst
Effect: The target makes saving throws against all effects that a save can end. The target gains a +4 bonus to all these saving throws.

Inauspicious Vulnerability Luckbringer Attack 20

You unleash a terrible malaise upon your enemies, weakening their resistance to cold, fire, lightning, and thunder.

Encounter ✦ Cold, Divine, Fire, Implement, Lighting, Thunder
Standard Action
Area burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage.
Effect: Enemies in burst gains a vulnerability 10 + your Charisma modifier to cold, fire, lightning, and thunder (save ends).

Luckbringer of Tymora Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Religion check.

DC 10: During the Time of Troubles, Tymora appeared in Arabel and stayed in her temple there, which was called the Lady's House, prompting a renaissance of Tymora's faith throughout Cormyr that continues to this day.

DC 15: Eveningstar is home to a rare species of flying cat. Known as tressym, they are symbols of good luck.

DC 20: The faith of Tymora is popular among halflings—particularly so in the halfling communities of Gray Oaks (population 800) and Collinwood (population 300).

DC 30: Tymora has seduced dozens of deities and countless mortals over the centuries, but has remained curiously solemn and chaste since the death of her consort, Tyr.

DC 40: Prior to the Dawn Cataclysm, which was a war among the gods that unfolded millennia past, a single deity called Tyche controlled both good and bad luck. Corrupted by Moander, deity of rot and decay, Tyche was split right down the middle by a purifying bolt of light summoned by her longtime friend Selûne. From the smoking husk emerged two new deities: Tymora and her spiteful sister Beshaba.

Heroic Tier Divinity Feat

Divinity feats grant characters who have the Channel Divinity class feature (clerics and paladins) the use of special powers from their deity.

Favor of Tymora [Divinity]

Prerequisites: Channel Divinity class feature; must worship Tymora
Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *favor of Tymora*.

Channel Divinity: Favor of Tymora Feat Power

Tyche's Fair-Haired Daughter protects those who take the greatest risks.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Target: You
Trigger: When you become bloodied
Effect: You gain a +1 bonus to all attack rolls and saving throws you make until the end of your next turn.
Special: You must take the Favor of Tymora feat to use this power.

About the Author

A software engineering manager by day and Forgotten Realms® aficionado by night, **Brian R. James** authored the *Grand History of the Realms* and continues to serve up new Realmslore through *D&D Insider* and the Candlekeep Compendium. Brian also contributed to the forthcoming 4th Edition *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*. Brian would like to thank Brian "Garen Thal" Cortijo for his invaluable assistance during the writing of this article.

The dragon lives in the sky, ocean, marshes, and mountains; and the mountains are also its cranium. Its voice thunders and jingles like copper pans. It breathes fire and water; and sometimes the dragon is one, sometimes many.

–The Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston

Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.

–G. K. Chesterton

by Chris Sims

Ecology of the Dragonborn

illustrations by Brian Hagan and William O'Connor

History

Myths speak of the birth of the dragonborn, though they differ in the telling. Tales, awe-inspiring and terrifying, tell of the rise and fall of dragonborn empires, the greatest among them lost to a war that is still remembered. And modern dragonborn live according to their heritage, more than one aiming to carve an eternal story into the world's chronicles.

Several legends say that Io, the greatest dragon god, shaped the dragonborn as servants to dragons at the same time he created the first dragons. Elemental essence and astral spirit went into the making, as with all worldly creatures, but like their greater kin, dragonborn were given a balance favoring the elemental.

Other tales claim that Io died in the clashes between the gods and the primordials. The draconic gods Tiamat and Bahamut emerged from the halves of Io's sundered corpse. Dragonborn sprang, ready to serve dragons, from Io's spilled blood.

Timing of dragonborn genesis aside, Tiamat and Bahamut were instantly at odds. As soon as the war against the primordials ended in the gods' favor, these siblings began a struggle for dominance over dragonkind that has lasted into the present age. Many dragons and dragonborn took sides. Some turned to Tiamat's ways, others to Bahamut's, but a plurality walked a path between the two extremes.

Dragonborn families formed clans, extended groups unified by geographic proximity and similar temperaments. A large number of clans dedicated themselves to serving dragons. Many of these dragons belonged to bloodlines on one side or the other of the war between Bahamut and Tiamat. Others were autonomous wyrms who guided and nurtured their dragonborn followers. And still other dragonborn families, sometimes after the loss of a dragon patron, formed clan ties independent of dragons. These unified clans had military discipline in common, which was a trait needed in ongoing war or for mere defense in the elder world.

From within this clan structure, the dragonborn and their dragon lords formed centralized, cooperative states. They developed codified laws, as well as civic and religious institutions. War and diplomacy further unified realms. Dragonborn nations waxed and waned. All along, the conflict between the dragon gods did the same.

Historians, dragonborn and otherwise, differ on the subject of the outcome of the draconic conflict. A few claim that Bahamut's forces won in that early age. More say that moderate dragonborn came to the fore, forcing divine agendas into a secondary position related to worldly matters. The likeliest scenario is that the unaligned among the dragonborn showed a preference for heroic and kindly values, as common folk often do. This esteem placed Bahamut's followers in an advantageous position, allowing them to persevere over their adversaries. At the same time, the needs of mortal creatures took precedence over the machinations of immortals.

Regardless of the truth of the matter, after numerous dragonborn kingdoms had passed into forgotten history, a unified array of dragonborn city-states formed the storied empire of Arkhosia. Dragon nobles integrated under a dragon emperor, mythically dubbed the Golden One. A dragonborn bureaucracy supported the nobles, protected by a military headed at first by the general Surina Moonscale. The Golden One and mighty Moonscale held Bahamut in highest regard among the gods, and this faith helped establish central principles for the empire.

Imperial priests also held strongly to the tenets of Erathis, Ioun, and Kord. The empire expanded its territory with a goal of bringing civilization, knowledge, and safety to untamed places and ignorant peoples. It gained land as much through word, trade, and decency as it did through battle. Within mere centuries, Arkhosia ruled large portions of the known realms.

Arkhosia seemed to be an unstoppable taming force that would eventually span the world, bringing progress and a measure of uprightness with it. Even Tiamat's worship was outlawed and forced into secrecy. But evil other than Tiamat's had risen to power in lands distant from Arkhosia's central regions. Eventually, the expanding borders of the fiendish kingdom of Bael Turath, ruled by tieflings and devils, collided with those of Arkhosia.

Ideology, culture, and ambition smashed together as well. No common ground could be found between the two empires. For one to succeed, the other had to fall. War was inescapable. It came swiftly and brutally, and it spanned hundreds of years.

Both sides suffered internal strife, mirroring the surface conflict. Tiamat's cult wormed away inside Arkhosia, weakening it. The desire of common folk to be free of infernal shackles poisoned Bael Turath's well of power. Bane's cult worked both sides, stoking the war hotter, while extremists loyal to Melora aimed to bring both empires down. Bitterness strengthened the utter incompatibility of ethos between the two nations.

Ever worse exchanges led the warring empires toward ruin. Bael Turath's forces heaped atrocities upon Arkhosia, corrupting some lands to the point that neither side could hope to reclaim. Many of Arkhosia's stalwarts of Bahamut began to thirst for retribution more than justice, to look to vengeance more than protecting the defenseless. Bloody Arkhosian campaigns against Bael Turath led some idealistic Arkhosians to doubt, and the empire's foundational beliefs faltered, causing political turmoil. Overextension of resources made it difficult for ironhanded Bael Turath to keep order in its core provinces.

Neither relented, eventually costing both everything. The Golden One and many dragon lords perished, some fleeing with their lives but without honor after the death of the dragon emperor. Lesser lords of the Nine Hells strode across battlefields, only to fall to draconic claws or the assaults of Arkhosia's legions. That which didn't disintegrate in direct combat crumbled under the stress inflicted by the seemingly endless and vicious war. But end that war did, when neither empire had the resources or the will left to fight. When the dust settled and the smoke cleared, Bael Turath and Arkhosia were no more.

Knowledge of the Dragonborn

Arcana

DC 25: Legend tells that dragonborn are a balance of astral and elemental essences, weighted more heavily toward the elemental like the great dragons are.

Dungeoneering

DC 20: The end came so fast for parts of Arkhosia, such as Serpentis Rift, that valuable draconic and dragonborn relics are buried there to this day. In other places, such as the fortress Razortear, fiendish and draconic remains mix as a testament to the fortunes of bygone wars. In any such place, one can expect creatures of the wilderness, dangerous old magic, and trapped or hidden fiends.

History

DC 15: Dragonborn once possessed a massive empire named Arkhosia. War against the tiefling realm of Bael Turath led to the ruin of both kingdoms. Now, the dragonborn consider no civilized place their native soil.

DC 20: Dragons ruled Arkhosia. The dragonborn served them. Theirs was a sophisticated realm, and the clash with Bael Turath was a war of progressive civilization against oppressive tyranny.

DC 25+: Fine details of the Arkhosia and its war against Bael Turath are master-level pieces of knowledge.

Nature

For nondragonborn, the general traits of the dragonborn are common knowledge. Details of their life cycle, inner physiology, and development, as well as the intricacies of their society are expert knowledge.

Religion

DC 15: Dragonborn have strong ties to the draconic gods, Bahamut and Tiamat. Bahamut's worshipers are more numerous and bold, but Tiamat's followers still thrive in the shadows.

DC 20: The dragonborn of Arkhosia also venerated Erathis, Ioun, and Kord—civilization, knowledge and prophecy, and battle.

DC 25+: Dragonborn creation myths and the ongoing conflict between Bahamut and Tiamat are master-level pieces of knowledge.

Fiends of Bael Turath that weren't hurled back into the Hells hid among the ruins, and Arkhosia's few remaining dragon lords abandoned the wreckage or squabbled over the remains. Tieflings and dragonborn alike were left with no choice but to largely abandon their lands in search of refuge elsewhere in the world.

Most present-day dragonborn are integrated into mixed societies and are living in lands they cannot claim as their own. A few clans, as well as many individuals, roam in search of worthy causes, or simple wealth and personal glory. All continue to venerate the dragonborn model set forth in centuries-gone Arkhosia, making their way according to a high personal standard.

Physiology

Imposing, strong, and draconic, dragonborn cut an impressive figure among other humanoids. An average dragonborn is tall and strapping compared to the normal human, although the basic shape is the same. Also distinctive from human counterparts is a dragonborn's dragonlike head, scales, fangs, and claws.

Despite a passing resemblance to reptilian creatures, dragonborn are warm-blooded beings rather than cold-blooded reptiles. Their bodies are hot enough to seem feverish to human sensibilities. This keeps a dragonborn more comfortable in cold temperatures. A lack of body hair coupled with a large mouth that can be opened to release body heat means that a dragonborn is no more vulnerable to hot temperatures than a human.

The scales that cover a dragonborn are tougher than human skin. Although these scales make a dragonborn less susceptible to small, incidental wounds, they don't protect against damage dealt by weapons and similar purposeful attack. Dragonborn

also typically lack the inborn elemental resistances true dragons might possess.

Like true dragons, however, dragonborn hatch from eggs, usually laid singly or, more rarely, in a pair. Hatchlings are quickly capable of standing and walking, but their teeth take a few months to come in. During this time, the mother nurses her offspring. She slowly weans the child to soft and then normal food, which for dragonborn is usually more meat than other edibles.

By the end of the first year, a dragonborn hatchling has the mental and physical development of a 3-year-old human child. A dragonborn matures quickly throughout his or her youthful development. At about 12 years of age, the dragonborn is a lanky version of his or her adult self. Over the next 3 years, he or she fills out into an imposing adult form.

A likeness to dragons gives dragonborn physical might. Dragonborn also carry an almost supernatural bodily potential to tap into and develop draconic traits. Most develop a breath weapon, which is dangerous by the time a dragonborn reaches adulthood. Still, an individual dragonborn might manifest more draconic traits than another. One might do so at birth. Such a change could instead come as the dragonborn's soul quickens in the crucible of a spiritual path or as the body adapts in the wake of mighty deeds.

New Dragonborn Feats

The feats in this section are divided into heroic tier and paragon tier sections.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a dragonborn character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Adaptable Breath [Dragonborn]

Prerequisites: Dragonborn, *dragon breath* racial power

Benefit: Choose a damage type your breath weapon doesn't already have from among acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison. When you use your *dragon breath* racial power, you choose which damage type applies to the attack. Only one damage type applies for a given *dragon breath* attack.

Special: You can take this feat more than once. Each time you select this feat, choose another damage type for your dragon breath power that you don't already have for it.

Hurl Breath [Dragonborn]

Prerequisites: Dragonborn, *dragon breath* racial power

Benefit: When you use your *dragon breath* power, you can hurl it as an area attack instead of using it as a close blast. You create an orb of energy that explodes in a burst 2 with a range of 10 squares.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a dragonborn character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Admixture Breath [Dragonborn]

Prerequisites: Dragonborn, *dragon breath* racial power, Adaptable Breath

Benefit: When you use your *dragon breath* power, you can mix any two of the damage types to which you have access. Your *dragon breath* deals both types of damage. This doesn't increase the amount of damage you deal, but a creature must be able to resist or be immune to both damage types to reduce or ignore the damage. If a creature is vulnerable to either damage type, it is considered to be vulnerable to damage from your *dragon breath*.

For instance, if you chose the fire damage type at character creation and chose lightning when you took the Adaptable Breath feat, your dragon breath deals fire damage and lightning damage. A creature immune to fire but vulnerable to lightning is considered to be vulnerable to your *dragon breath*.

Dragonborn Zeal [Dragonborn]

Prerequisites: Dragonborn, Dragonborn Frenzy, Great Fortitude, Toughness

Benefit: The *dragonborn zeal* racial utility power replaces one of your utility powers. The power it replaces must be 12th level or higher. If you do not yet have a power of 12th level or higher, you can replace the appropriate power when you gain it.

Also, when you use your second wind, you can choose to gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of your next turn in addition to the defense bonus typically granted for a second wind.

Dragonborn Zeal **Paragon Dragonborn Racial Utility**

Your wounds sometimes make you relentless.

Daily ✦ Healing
Immediate Reaction **Personal**
Trigger: Your hit points drop to 0 or fewer
Effect: You regain hit points equal to your healing surge value plus your Charisma modifier. Add your Charisma modifier as a power bonus to your attack rolls and damage rolls against the enemy that reduced you to 0 hit points or fewer until the end of your next turn.

Psychology

Dragonborn psychology centers on a draconic nature tempered by strong cultural ideals. The inner draconic spark is expressed as intensity coupled with a well-developed sense of self. From this sprouts a resolve born of an honest desire to be the best one can be and to be worthy of one's heritage. Tradition

focuses the dragonborn ego with principles of personal excellence, accountability, honor, and wisdom.

Strongly emotional, dragonborn approach life with a natural enthusiasm. Passion comes easily, and dragonborn readily invest themselves in the tasks set before them. At its simplest and perhaps basest level, this fervor expresses itself in extremes of feeling—dragonborn don't hide anger or joy. Such emotion also surfaces as ferocity in battle, especially when dragonborn feel their resolve faltering. When failure comes into view as a possibility, dragonborn become more tenacious.

This is partly because a healthy self-image is common among dragonborn. Few dragonborn are timid or reserved, except as a matter of showing proper respect to others. Guided by personal morals, dragonborn look out for themselves, along with those creatures and items they value. They have no trouble asking for what they need or taking time to improve their abilities. And they expect others to do the same. How else can associates and friends rely on one another? In what other way can society be expected to function?

The paradox in the dragonborn belief in a strong group dynamic is that, like dragons, all dragonborn are fiercely independent. They learn to be so in their upbringing, focused as it is on individuality. So this conviction is an outgrowth of personal pride. Dragonborn see the strengths of a group they are part of as an expression of their own strengths. The group's failures and successes become those of the dragonborn members within it, reflecting on them and their choice to be a part of the group.

Coupled with such pride, dragonborn carry a high personal standard. When a challenge comes, dragonborn rise to it. They set their sights on success and keep going until no options remain to prevent failure. This trait isn't as simple as a disdain for flaws and lack of success. Dragonborn want to contribute and to be seen as valuable by those they value. They consistently want to show that their confidence in themselves and the reliance others have on them isn't misplaced. Consideration of how they can become better at whatever they do, whether by further fortifying assets or shoring up weaknesses, is part of dragonborn thinking.

Responsibility is also a piece of the dragonborn mindset. This can be an expression of their attachment to others involved in a situation. It's also attributable to the cultural value placed on respect, for self and others, and good judgment. No dragonborn gives his or her word lightly. In fact, dragonborn often value honoring their promises and fulfilling their obligations more than their lives.

Good judgment is, therefore, required of dragonborn. They must assess the options before them and make the best choice. A failure to do so is just that—failure.

As an expression of all these personality aspects, any dragonborn aware of his or her abilities might realize he or she can't hope to succeed in certain circumstances. Dragonborn show wisdom by not giving their oaths to accomplish what they know they can't. They show virtue by admitting their sense of the state of affairs and offering to help as best they can. They show courage by trying to accomplish the impossible anyway, when the cost of inaction would otherwise be too great.

Such positive expressions of dragonborn nature are common especially among heroic dragonborn. But, as with all fallible creatures, negative expressions also abound. Passion can lead dragonborn to brutality, hasty decisions, and unrighteous vengeance. Greed and worse forms of selfishness can grow from a misguided ego. Blind ambition can follow a commitment to excellence, as can a willingness to evaluate others severely or to undertake foolhardy deeds.

Although such twisting of virtue can be a seed of wickedness, most of the time it never goes so far. An individual dragonborn might not see some of his or her failings, but such negative behavior never truly descends into evil. And a lot of dragonborn villains display a subset of dragonborn scruples, especially courtesy and respect to enemies.

CULTURE

Dragonborn trace their modern cultural leanings to the hale days of Arkhosia, when the precepts of dignity and progress were paramount in the dragonborn mindset. In Arkhosia, strong clans arose and formed ties that yet endure among dragonborn bloodlines. Within that lost empire, dragonborn knew their greatest glory and became instilled with an everlasting sense of their place in the world. War with Bael Turath and the loss of Arkhosia served to hone dragonborn into what they are today.

Clan

Clans and family bloodlines are still preserved among the dragonborn, and both are important. The difference between the two is subtle. Family is defined by one's actual blood relatives as far back as records go. Clan is a federation of families, unified in the annals of time, often for forgotten ends.

All dragonborn revere their honored ancestors, family, and clan. They perform their work with an eye toward what their deeds say about their lineage. Such ties can define peace and enmity, as well as cooperation or antagonism, among individual dragonborn. Families and clans have reputations, good or ill, that can have little to do with the living scions of the bloodline.

The desire to live up to a laudable legacy or overcome a besmirched birthright can define a dragonborn's life. Some dragonborn instead embrace infamy or flee from the responsibility imposed by the past. Others make their way according to personal values, perhaps aiming at becoming the most capable and admired dragonborn among the elders of a clan, thereby becoming the clanmaster.

When doing so is possible, all dragonborn of a particular clan look to their clanmaster for guidance. Clan elders have ways to contact a distant clanmaster. The clanmaster also has loyal dragonborn agents to act in his or her stead, and to serve as messengers.

Keeping contact can be difficult, but dragonborn of the same clan more easily form cohesive coalitions and enclaves. Marriages are defined by age-old pacts among clans. Dragonborn parents with weighty responsibilities look to such relations for help fostering children. A whole ward in a large settlement might be filled with dragonborn from allied clans, and each clan could have its own hall like in the old days of Arkhosia.

DRAGONBORN NAMES

Dragonborn have personal names, given at birth, as described in the *Player's Handbook*. They can also have childhood names, family names, and clan names. All these come according to a dragonborn's heritage and place in dragonborn society.

A childhood name or nickname is common. Such a name is usually descriptive, and it serves as a term of endearment or encouragement for a young dragonborn. The name might recall an event or center on a habit. It could derive from an ancestor that acted similarly to a child, or a favored toy or item might be the inspiration. Such names are seldom appropriate for adults. For anyone to use such a name without proper authority, such as that of a parent or elder, or without permission is a sign of disrespect. A dragonborn's elders use a childhood name after that dragonborn becomes an adult only to indicate disapproval.

Childhood Names: Climber, Earbender, Leaper, Pious, Little Kriv, Shieldbiter, Zealous.

Family names are Draconic words, much like given names, carried by a specific bloodline. They often come from the deeds of an ancient scion of the family line or an amalgamation of the names of notable ancient ancestors. A dragonborn seldom identifies itself by family name, unless specificity is required. Dragonborn keep their family names private except among close friends, and instead go by clan name.

Family Names: Alreja, Bhergav, Duggal, Garodya, Iyotar, Letrah, Mulhotra, Odeyar, Pradhu, Reddyar, Samanga, Tyagi, Ulharej, Vadula, Yadav, Zaveri.

Clan names are ancient titles that are frequently taken from the names of dragon lords of Arkhosia. Those that aren't dragon names are names of trade associations or martial cadres, much like modern guilds, arcane societies, or knightly orders. A dragonborn goes by his clan name, so his deeds are known to reflect on that clan. Members of a clan fiercely defend their clan name against misuse, and some dragonborn outlaws are stripped of the privilege of using the clan name.

Clan Names: Bloodbane, Drakerider, Flamebrow, Hammerwing, Loremark, Moonscale, Peaceblade, Redmark, Silverspear, Spellscale, Warbringer.

Family

All this focus on clan comes from the fact that, while family bloodlines can be extensive, the dragonborn family unit is very small. The typical one contains only two dragonborn: a mated pair, or a parent and child.

Dragonborn wed to procreate. Although notable exceptions exist to this generality, wedlock ends as soon as the offspring from a union is 3 years old. If the parents have no reason to maintain proximity, one of them, usually of the same gender as the child,

raises and trains that youngster in the ways of people, family, and clan.

Honor demands that a parent teach a child well, and that adults care for the young. Through storytelling, tutoring, and demonstration, the parent instills virtues and skills in the child. Although this process serves to educate, it also gives the youngster's fiery spirit a focus. Without such direction, the fierce nature of a dragonborn comes to the fore, resulting in feral savagery.

When rightly trained in dragonborn ways, however, a juvenile learns that honor requires respect for elders and other worthies, focused and sincere effort, reliability and fulfillment of oaths, and integrity. At an early age, he or she understands that chosen actions can bring credit or disgrace to self, family and clan, and even all dragonborn. Even dragonborn crafters and laborers grow up with discipline, play inspired by lessons and tales of derring-do, and an admiration for brave and principled deeds. All learn a thing or two about fighting and soldierly ways. They learn to be bold so that they can challenge themselves and those who misuse authority.

Where dragonborn are a small portion of the local population, which is the norm, such tiny families are common. But where an integrated enclave exists, the process is different, and some dragonborn claim, resembles what life was like in Arkhosia. In such a community, dragonborn foster children communally. Adults watch out for and teach the young, and the young enjoy a broader exposure to an array of dragonborn role models. A single parent still maintains authority and responsibility for a youngster, but in these situations, the other parent is often close at hand and has some influence as well.

Adulthood

Independence is nurtured in dragonborn youth at every turn. When, at 15 years old, dragonborn adolescents transition into adulthood, they are expected to have integrated the teachings of their childhood into their conduct. They have a healthy respect for capable individuals of all races, even those they oppose. Their esteem for themselves and their forebears guides them in all they do. Responsibility for their actions transitions from them and their parents to each individual alone, even though a dragonborn's deeds reflects on upbringing and heritage.

Principled behavior and instilled daring mean dragonborn adults are different from their counterparts among other peoples. Dragonborn society produces fewer petty criminals, but more outright villains—dragonborn are more likely to be bandit lords than pickpockets. Conversely, dragonborn are numerous among adventurers. They also find places more regularly in the company of those who have unusual or specialized skills, artistic or venturesome.

Regardless of what they do, whether among other dragonborn or not, dragonborn are conscious of how they are responsible for what they do. A dragonborn weaponsmith aims to be the best, to push the boundaries of his craft, to sell weapons in a scrupulous manner, and to honor those who use his armaments by creating implements of worth. The dragonborn soldier, in turn, honors armorer, commander, and clan, by performing his or her duties well. He or she does so by taking initiative in training and on the battlefield, and by helping comrades. Failing to recognize such interconnectivity is a failing of character. This system of honor with awareness and answerability was the strength of the dragonborn when, in Arkhosia, they served dragons.

Dragons

Today's dragonborn serve dragons as an exception rather than a rule. Some clans still remember the last days of Arkhosia, when the selfishness and cowardice of some dragon lords became all too visible. Dragonborn from these bloodlines might despise dragons. Other clans still hold dragons in esteem, weighing a

dragon's worth by its actions. Most clans remain free from draconic influence. Those few dragonborn who serve dragons are often more barbaric than their kin who live among humans and other races.

Magic

Dragonborn have ancient traditions of magic, focusing on war, as well as divine, draconic, and elemental forces. As fierce as a dragonborn's heart, magic among the dragonborn is seldom bent to mundane tasks. It is a weapon of the mighty.

Despite a natural talent for the arts of the warlock, typical dragonborn prefer an arcane path that doesn't tie them to forces outside themselves. Wizards and sorcerers are notorious for their secretive and eccentric ways, which makes the professions attractive to dragonborn. Further, the powers of the wizard and sorcerer are dragonlike in their primordial fury. Many clans have wizardly ways passed down through numerous families among them since the time of Arkhosia. These things said, sometimes the warlock's road is an acceptable expression of individualism or the last resort of an outcast.

Evolution of the Dragonborn

In the earliest days of the D&D game, some dragons could take human form. It was a fascinating idea—a great and terrifying beast in the skin of a mere mortal. Fortunately for many players, it was initially an ability that good dragons had. Later, that ability migrated to neutral and evil dragons, such as the oriental dragons of the first *Fiend Folio* or the deep dragon in Ed Greenwood's *Drow of the Underdark*. *The Council of Wyrms* setting made it possible to play dragons in the D&D game.

Draconic humanoids also showed up in various forms, as did humanoids that could become dragons. Todd Lockwood's krolli appeared very early, in *The Dragon* (#36, April 1980). Draconians came only a little later, appearing in the *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* novel and *Dragons of Despair* adventure. Dragonkin appeared in the Forgotten Realms setting, and the defilers of the Dark Sun setting could become dragons over time. *Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume Three* presented the weredragon, which became the song dragon in Third Edition's *Monsters of Faerûn*. Even the Dragon Dice game had dice that represented dragon kin.

Third Edition pushed the draconic humanoid further, starting with a new look and feel for kobolds, as well as half-dragons. As the edition evolved, draconic creatures and spawn of Tiamat also appeared, along with the dragonblood subtype. One race that fell into that subtype was the dragonborn of Bahamut, humanoids who, to show devotion to Bahamut, willingly took on draconic traits in place of their original biology.

The dragonborn of the 4th Edition D&D game take many cues from the dragonborn of Bahamut, as well as other dragonblood creatures from 3rd Edition. Like their predecessors, the dragonborn bear a mystique and fierceness unique to dragons, and they can be strongly affiliated with draconic deities. In fact, in an earlier iteration of 4th Edition, the dragonborn were called the dragonblood.

In the final analysis, though, the dragonborn name was a better fit. It more aptly describes a race of draconic humanoids that share the legacy of the most important creature in the Dungeons & Dragons game.

Dragonborn truly favor divine powers, especially those of the paladin. Investing oneself in the tenets of a faith gives direction and purpose, something many dragonborn crave. Although doing so ties a dragonborn to a deity or church, it carries little to none of the stigma attached to the eldritch ways of the warlock. And the paladin's obligation is to stand in the vanguard of a church's defenders, which is the perfect place for a being that has a martial spirit.

Religion

Faith is a personal matter for each dragonborn, and it is an issue in which the dragon deities take prominence. Bahamut is most important among the dragonborn people, but Tiamat's cult thrives well in the hearts of avaricious dragonborn. Erathis, Ioun, and Kord also remain important as symbols of advancement and a progressive, fighting spirit.

Bereft of their own temples, most dragonborn practice religion in churches within mixed communities. They participate in few rites, unless duty, such as that placed on a cleric or paladin, or respect, such as that for a devout friend, compels them to do so. Clan elders preside over dragonborn marriages and funeral rites, for instance; absent these, family and close friends participate. Although gods might be invoked at such ceremonies, to call such rites religious would be a mistake.

Art

Dragonborn are practical and meticulous about their crafts. Like dwarves, they create few items for purely artistic reasons, preferring the coupling of functionality and beauty. Strong individuality among dragonborn causes them to focus more on personal items, such as weapons, rather than those that can't be carried, such as architecture or statuary. One exception to this generality of usability and beauty exists in the case of jewelry.

Crafters among the dragonborn take care and time with their work. A finished work is an expression of the nature and capabilities of its maker. Although completed items are seldom as ornate as the work of dwarves, a dragonborn item almost always has a distinctive flare. Elemental, draconic, and scale motifs are most common, as are bold colors and precious metals.

The love of bold colors and precious metals extends to jewelry, gems, armaments, and even coins. Many dragonborn crafters are jewelers, gemcutters, smiths, or minters. Clearly an expression of the draconic tendency to hoard valuables, dragonborn adorn themselves with baubles of all sorts, and dragonborn warriors and adventurers seek out the finest gear. Most dragonborn show reserve and taste in this aspect of personal adornment, rather than garish overindulgence.

Leisure

Improving abilities and competition take precedence in dragonborn leisure activities. When dragonborn aren't honing their skills, they're playing a game or engaging in an activity to prove their grit—mental, physical, or spiritual. Dragonborn don't restrict their activities to familiar skills. Part of developing oneself is expanding one's horizons.

Dragonborn do prefer competitive games. Although team events are fine, contests that have one clear winner are favored. Therefore, a dragonborn hones skill at strategic board games, philosophic riddle contests, improvised storytelling events, and one-on-one sports.

The ferocity of the draconic spirit couples with physical strength and militaristic culture, leading dragonborn to create and participate in sports more violent than many other peoples are used to. In fact, numerous dragonborn—even nonheroic sorts—form fighting or wrestling clubs, as well as regular contests of weapon skill. Intrepid dragonborn try their hands at actual blood sports, such as gladiatorial matches, pit fighting, and dueling.

Enemies and Allies

Dragonborn have few overarching racial enemies or allies. Their history might have provided them with a natural enmity for tieflings, but that doesn't pan out in reality. The same can't be said for devils. It is the nature of dragonborn to form strong ties with trusted friends, however, and a dragonborn's boon companions are often treated more like family or clanmates.

Despite the centuries-gone war between Arkhosia and Bael Turath, few modern dragonborn hate tieflings. Most see the disintegration of the two nations as a mutually shameful episode in history, brought on as much by the eroding of Arkhosia's creed as the depravity of Bael Turath's rulers. Many dragonborn also recognize that those tieflings now alive aren't responsible for the wrongdoing of their forebears. So dragonborn weigh tieflings like they do other people—on individual merit, respecting even the worthy adversary.

Exceptions to this generality exist. Some dragonborn clans, especially those who have descended into barbarism or those who still serve dragons, still bear old grudges. More widespread among dragonborn, however, is ill will toward the true masters of Bael Turath, the devils who led the once-human empire astray. Few dragonborn are willing to put trust in anything or anyone that even seems to be aligned with the Nine Hells.

Dragonborn do rely on allies and friends. In fact, dragonborn are frequently without nearby family or clan members, and comrades are essential in the darkening world. Dragonborn give their all to support those who trust them. When such associates show a similar sense of duty, dragonborn come to see them like relatives. They eventually form clanlike bonds with them, sharing the stories of their lives and people. Nondragonborn do well to realize the honor they're being given when such bonding occurs.

Encounters

Dragonborn employ intense and straightforward tactics, aiming at taking enemies out of an ongoing clash. Their military leaders facilitate efficient butchery. Arcanists pour on damage, their attacks resembling dragon breath weapons.

The dragonborn presented here are intended to supplement those presented in the *Monster Manual.*

Dragonborn Commandant Tactics

The dragonborn commandant leads from the front, wading into adversaries along with the troops. He or she sizes up the opposition, quickly using *designating smite* to direct followers' attacks. When the chosen target becomes bloodied, the commandant gives a *termination order.* The commandant then uses *designating smite* again on the next turn to focus damage on another enemy. In between giving tactical directions, the dragonborn attacks using *arcing slice,* breathing *dragon breath* when more than one enemy can be caught in the blast.

Dragonborn Elementalist Tactics

This dragonborn hangs back and opens the battle with *acid rain* on clustered opponents. He or she then uses *lightning blast,* supplementing with *dragon breath* when an opportunity presents itself. *Icicle spray* is the elementalist's preferred attack against foes that seem likely to approach and make melee attacks, and the dragonborn often uses this power just after resorting to *winging wind.*

Dragonborn Commandant **Level 7 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 600

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4
HP 158; **Bloodied** 79; see also *dragonborn frenzy*
AC 24; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 21
Saving Throws +2
Speed 5
Action Points 1

Fullblade (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage and marked until the end of the commandant's next turn.

Arcing Slice (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
The dragonborn commandant makes two fullblade attacks, each against a different target within reach.

Designating Smite (standard; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Weapon**
+14 vs. AC; 1d12 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the commandant's next turn and slowed (save ends). In addition, while the creature is slowed due to this attack, the dragonborn commandant and all his allies gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls and a +4 power bonus to damage rolls against that target.

Termination Order (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy becomes bloodied; encounter) ✦ **Weapon**
The dragonborn commandant immediately recharges *designating smite* (if necessary), and uses that power against the triggering enemy.

Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ✦ **Acid**
Close blast 3; +12 vs. Reflex (+13 while bloodied); 1d6 + 5 acid damage.

Dragonborn Frenzy (only while bloodied)
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills History +13, Intimidate +14
Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 11 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 16 (+6) **Cha** 18 (+7)
Equipment plate armor, fullblade

Dragonborn Elementalist **Level 8 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 350

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4
HP 67; **Bloodied** 33; see also *dragonborn fury*
AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20
Speed 6

Quarterstaff (standard; at-will) ✦ **Weapon**
+12 vs. AC (+13 while bloodied); 1d8 + 2 damage.

Lightning Blast (standard; at-will) ✦ **Arcane, Lightning**
Area burst 1 within 10; +13 vs. Reflex (+14 while bloodied); 2d6 + 4 lightning damage.

Dragon Breath (minor; encounter) ✦ **Cold** or **Fire**
Close blast 5; +11 vs. Reflex (+12 while bloodied); 1d6 + 4 cold damage or fire damage; choose when using the power.

Acid Rain (standard; encounter) ✦ **Arcane, Acid**
Area burst 2 within 10; +13 vs. Fortitude (+14 while bloodied); 1d8 + 4 acid damage. The acid rain persists until the end of the elementalist's next turn, dealing 10 acid damage to any creature that starts or ends its turn in the area, though a creature can take this damage only once on a given turn.

Icicle Spray (standard; encounter) ✦ **Arcane, Cold**
Close blast 5; +13 vs. Reflex (+14 while bloodied); 2d6 + 6 cold damage. Blast becomes difficult terrain until the end of the elementalist's next turn.

Dragonborn Fury (only while bloodied)
A dragonborn gains a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls.

Winging Wind (immediate interrupt, when the elementalist would be hit by a melee or ranged attack; encounter)
Winds whip up, granting the elementalist a +2 bonus to the defense targeted by the attack. The elementalist can shift 2 squares, ignoring difficult terrain, and the attacker is pushed 2 squares.

Alignment Any **Languages** Common, Draconic
Skills Arcana +13, History +15
Str 15 (+6) **Dex** 11 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+4)
Con 13 (+5) **Int** 19 (+8) **Cha** 17 (+7)
Equipment robes, quarterstaff

Encounter Group

The following is a sample central cadre in a dragonborn mercenary company. It represents the unit's commander and that commander's pet, the magical center of the unit, and the commander's trusted soldiers.

Level 7 Encounter (XP 1,550)
- ✦ 1 dragonborn commandant (level 7 elite soldier [leader])
- ✦ 2 dragonborn soldiers (level 5 soldier)
- ✦ 1 dragonborn elementalist (level 8 artillery)
- ✦ 1 rage drake (level 5 brute)

About the Author

Chris Sims started out working for small d20 companies in 2003, then landed a freelance editor gig for Wizards RPG R&D. Wizards finally got annoyed enough by his constant applications to hire him as the *Duel Masters* editor in 2005. From there, Chris wheedled his way into RPG R&D as an editor, and finally became a story designer after masterminding a few choice assassinations. His credits include *Monster Manual V*, *Secrets of Sarlona*, *Rules Compendium*, and the *Eberron Survival Guide* (thanks, Logan!).

CODEX OF BETRAYAL
BELETH, THE WITCH'S VISCOUNT

by Ari Marmell
illustrations by Ben Wootten

EVIL AS IT MAY BE, the upper hierarchy of the Nine Hells is a structured, orderly system. This is due, in part, to the lingering remnants of the days of old, since the beings who rose up against their divine master seek a sense of purpose and equilibrium in their new and cursed existence. It comes, in part, from their efforts to organize and keep an eye on each other, for what devil in his right mind would trust his compatriots?

"Yet even as the forces of He Who Was faced off against their traitorous fellows, their mighty golden shields repelling black swords that could cleave the sun in twain, did they find foul pestilential things, vile beings made black and putrid by the hatred in their hearts, stabbing and biting them about the ankles. And as these tiny horrors diverted their attentions, their shields wavered; black swords struck home, and blood spilled across the clouds of the heavens.

"And even as the generals of He Who Was, riding high in their chariots of radiant gold, gave orders to their heralds, their words were stolen by foul spies, smaller than a newborn child and invisible even to those on their guard. And these words were delivered unto the generals of the betrayers, whose soldiers awaited the armies of their foes and crushed them all unawares.

"For these vile beings, and these spies, were the ears of Beleth, who has known since before the world was new that the tiniest dangers are those most likely to be overlooked by gods and by men."

—From Chapter 4, verse 19, of "A Chronicle of Bloodstained Heavens," being the second part of the *Codex of Betrayal*.

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And it comes, in part, from the dictates of Asmodeus, who seeks to build an army capable of spreading across the cosmos—and who watches each and every one of his underlings with an unblinking eye, lest any rise up against him as he did against his own master.

Thus do the archdukes of the Nine Hells each reign over their own layer of the domain, and thus do hundreds of devils below them carry their own titles—duke and general, knight and count—and their own areas of responsibility.

Almost lost among these many diabolic commanders, schemers, and taskmasters stands one who knows too well the value of being overlooked. This is Beleth—known also as the Witch's Viscount, and the Prince of Imps—who has built his power upon the wings of a hundred devils and the secrets of a thousand more. Today he stands as spymaster to the wicked and sensual Glasya, daughter of Asmodeus and ruler of Malbolge—but in his day, he has served at the whim of nearly every archduke, and a dozen of the Nine Hells' other lords. Each values the advice of Beleth due to his skill in unearthing almost any secret—and none can afford in the slightest to trust him, for none can say what he might know about *them*.

The Codex of Betrayal

Much of the information on the Nine Hells and its foul inhabitants available to sages and priests comes from an impossibly ancient tome entitled *The Codex of Betrayal*. A massive text of multiple thousands of pages, the *Codex* was penned by a man known to history only as Brother Eiulo. The priest, assuming that's truly what he was, claims in his writings to have been the last surviving servitor of the deity whom Asmodeus murdered. The *Codex of Betrayal* is divided into four books, each of which contains several dozen chapters.

✦ "A Chronicle of He Who Once Lit Our Way, His Heavens, and the Earth Below," which covers the days preceding Asmodeus's uprising.

✦ "A Chronicle of Bloodstained Heavens," a record of the uprising and the war itself.

✦ "A Chronicle of Unquenchable Flames and Unbreakable Maledictions," which details the earliest years of the Nine Hells under Asmodeus, the devils' reactions to the curse, and the establishment of the initial hierarchy.

✦ "A Lexicon of Murderers Most Hated and Vile," a list and description of every devil about whom Brother Eiulo could learn even the most minor fact.

Although several pages of the original manuscript are scattered throughout the archives of various churches and the libraries of rich sages, most of the existing material is in the form of second- or third-hand copies. Little of the first book of the *Codex* remains in any form; the other three are missing material, but still present a veritable treasure trove of information on devils and the Nine Hells.

Strangely, none of the copies of the *Codex* include the name of the god whom Asmodeus slew. Even in the surviving pages of the original text, the name has been literally scraped off the parchment, replaced with titles such as "He Who Was" and "He Who Once Lit Our Way." Whether this was done by Eiulo or someone who came after, none can say. While many scholars refuse to attribute any qualities to this unknown deity, some theorize that the deity may have been one of knowledge or good due to the choice of words in these substitutions.

History

Beleth was one of the first "generation" of beings in the service of He Who Was. Never one of the greatest warriors of his ilk, nor one of those assigned to carry the divine word to mortals, he came to appreciate the abilities of those around him—a lesson that would serve him well during, and beyond, the horrors to come.

Before the Uprising

The devil who would become Beleth—whether that was his name before the Uprising is unclear—was, for lack of a better descriptor, a bureaucrat. He delivered commands from He Who Was to many of the generals, and carried messages between agents of the deity. At his beck and call he had, not powerful warriors with blinding wings and swords of fire, but tiny creatures—the original nature of which has been lost to time—whose job was to fetch, carry, and deliver missives.

Like most servants of the deity, Beleth was initially satisfied with his lot, and he was proud to serve as ordered and to perform his duties in the name of his god. Yet, like so many others in the days leading up to Asmodeus's rebellion, Beleth began to grow discontent with his position, tainted by a mounting sense of ambition. This was not because he became jealous of the greater servants to whom he was little more than a go-between, nor due to his nigh-daily witnessing of the power wielded by He Who Was and those who served him directly.

No, Beleth came to a sudden realization—probably on his own, but possibly whispered into his ears by others already loyal to Asmodeus's growing aspirations. It occurred to Beleth just how much power he *already had*—power he was failing to exercise. Since he and his servitors were the ones who delivered orders and carried messages, they could also *change* those

orders; also, they knew more about the others around them than any of them could possibly realize. Military tactics, personal activities—Beleth had knowledge of them all.

When minions of Asmodeus approached Beleth to join in their rebellion, the "mere messenger" couldn't agree fast enough—if for no other reason than the chance to exercise and explore his newly discovered power.

During the War

In the earliest stages of Asmodeus's uprising, Beleth maintained a façade of allegiance to He Who Was. Many of the earliest victories won by the rebels under Asmodeus were due not to military supremacy, but because Beleth delivered to them a full report of their enemies' tactics, or changed orders between generals and their troops. Not all Beleth's messengers were willing to cooperate with his blasphemous activities, but most were all too excited to explore the new power they could exercise over those who had ignored them. Those few who did not were set upon by the remainder, at Beleth's order, and slain.

Still, it was only a matter of time before Beleth's espionage would be discovered, and he knew it. Sooner or later, the agents of He Who Was would realize that their orders were being intercepted or corrupted; or else one of the messengers who remained loyal to his god, and who had gone undetected by Beleth's cadre, would come out of hiding and report Beleth's activities. At the first sign that his fellow agents started to suspect him, Beleth and his tiny spies fled, assassinating several of the deity's servitors who still trusted them.

Beleth's usefulness to Asmodeus's forces changed at this point, but it hardly came to an end. Beleth was placed under the command of Moloch, one of Asmodeus's lieutenants in the rebellious armies. From here, he shared with his new masters all his knowledge of the foe's plans, military strategies, and—most importantly—the ins and outs of their communications. His messengers served in their new army with far more loyalty than they had in their old, passing orders swiftly and efficiently. Though not mighty warriors, they engaged in battle, en masse and invisibly, distracting their enemy so that the soldiers of Asmodeus might lay them low. And they continued to spy, taking advantage of their tiny size and powers of invisibility and misdirection.

Beleth's hopes and ambitions flared anew when the devils discovered that mortal souls could be . . . used for all manner of diabolic magic.

The Early Years of the Nine Hells

Beleth was horrifically frustrated by the curse of vengeance that left the devils trapped in the Nine Hells at the conclusion of their rebellion, for he was in a largely untenable position. Though instrumental in many of the army's victories, he lacked the power and influence of Asmodeus's generals, and so he was granted only a small domain within Moloch's layer of Malbolge. Further, knowing full well his propensity for altering messages to his own advantage, few of the newly landed dukes and barons of the Nine Hells would make use of either Beleth or his cadre of minions. Certainly, Beleth could continue to use his followers as spies, learning some potent secrets and perhaps convert those into an amount of influence, but it seemed that the devil who had grown fascinated with his power would never rise above his current status.

The Flow of Souls

Beleth's hopes and ambitions flared anew when the devils discovered that mortal souls could be redirected to the fires of the Nine Hells after death, and that those souls could be used for all manner of diabolic magic—including the powering of rituals and infernal machines, the animation of hellish constructs, and even the birthing and shaping of new generations of devils.

Many of these new souls-turned-devils were reborn as imps, tiny but malicious creatures that served their betters as messengers, lieutenants, spies, and—on occasion—assassins. And these imps were, in almost all respects, identical to the cursed and diabolic form of Beleth's corrupted messengers.

Where many of the other devils treated these imps—and many other new and weak forms of devils—with anger and contempt, Beleth welcomed them with open arms. He treated them with, if not kindness, than at least a degree of respect unmatched by any other noble of the Nine Hells. He offered them positions within his court and gave them servitors of their own. Over the course of the Nine Hells' earliest decades and centuries, Beleth became a true patron of imps in general, commanding a force of the minuscule but vicious devils second to none.

And because the other devils had no means of knowing which imps were Beleth's and which were not, the newly christened "Prince of Imps" was once again possessed of servants who had offices in the courts of his rivals, once again in a position to learn—and in some cases, even change—the messages and secrets dispatched from one devil to another.

The Covens Call

The newfound contact with the mortal realms offered Beleth another gateway to power, beyond the assimi-

lation of new imps and minor devils into his cadre of followers. With ever greater frequency, mortal spellcasters blinded by pride, ambition, or simple foolishness summoned devils from the depths of the Nine Hells, seeking a variety of powers and deals. And with each agreement, each handshake, each signature, another soul was damned.

Although the archdukes and dukes of the Nine Hells reserved the greatest of mortal pawns for themselves and their servants, the minor nobles had their pick of lesser casters. Beleth took frequent advantage of this fact, responding—or sending minions to respond—to calls from casters too weak for other devils to bother with. Further, because the majority of would-be-diabolists initially call upon imps, since the small devils are both easy to summon and make powerful familiars, Beleth's minions answered these calls more often than those of any other devil.

The result was that Beleth and his followers had unmatched access to the mortal realm during the earliest generations, when humanoids were just discovering the Nine Hells and the diabolical powers within them. In a variety of forms and through a variety of proxies, Beleth influenced the rites and rituals of summoning as practiced by various witch covens, hedge wizards, and journeyman mages. He altered occult beliefs and terminologies, taught new techniques of summoning, all with the intent of channeling even more mortal calls to his own court.

From Moloch to Malagarde

As more and more of his imps insinuated themselves into the ranks of other devils, granting Beleth a spy ring unprecedented within the Nine Hells, and as his name and his minions were called ever more frequently by mortal covens and cabals, the great powers of the Nine Hells finally took notice of him. Not all this notice was positive; Beleth's spies and inside information allowed him to survive no fewer than half a dozen assassination attempts.

For the most part, however, the devils did what devils normally do: tried to find a way to turn their new discovery to their advantage. First one archduke, then another, employed Beleth and his spy ring to their advantage, having him report on information from an enemy's court, or asking him to sway the activities of a mortal sect. And for each of these services, Beleth asked not souls or treasure—or at least, not just these—but political favors, added territories, or additional minions that were far more powerful than the imps he already commanded.

Eventually, Archduke Moloch granted Beleth a position within his court; not, some say, to take advantage of his abilities, so much as to keep an eye on him to ensure that others could not use him against Moloch. This was a gamble, since it also gave Beleth inside access to Moloch's sanctum, but since several of Beleth's imps were almost certainly insinuated within already, it seemed a minimal risk.

And there Viscount Beleth spent many centuries, devoting himself primarily to his duties as Moloch's spymaster, but still doing occasional "freelance" work for other devils, as long as those assignments did not pit him against Moloch.

Yet still Beleth was not content. Moloch, whom he had served before in Asmodeus's war and whom he served now, seemed unwilling to provide the new viscount any further opportunity for advancement. He was far more concerned with keeping Beleth under his thumb since he was paranoid that his spymaster would spy on him in turn.

Beleth turned to another powerful figure in Moloch's court—one whom his spies told him was just as ambitious: the archduke's consort, the vile night hag Malagarde. Using her influence and his information, the pair manipulated Moloch into rising up against Asmodeus, alongside a number of other rebellious archdukes and dukes. And as they had anticipated, Asmodeus laughingly defeated the lot and exiled Moloch from the Nine Hells. Beleth hoped that the King of the Nine Hells would appoint a replacement more amenable to his advancement, or more easily manipulated, but was pleasantly surprised when Moloch's successor turned out to be Malagarde. The countess was terrified that her diabolic rivals would band together against her, the only nondevil to rule a layer of the Nine Hells, and was only too happy to keep Beleth on as spymaster and advisor.

The Rise of Glasya

Beleth suspected that Asmodeus had ulterior motives in granting Malbolge to the night hag, but the spymaster who was accustomed to knowing everything was as shocked as everyone when Glasya, daughter of Asmodeus, slew the Hag Countess in a brutal show of power and usurped rulership of the domain—all with the explicit approval of her father. For the first time in centuries, Beleth was uncertain of his position.

Fortunately for him, Glasya—who swiftly sought to establish her right to rule independent of her father's power—was quick to recognize the advantage of the network of spies and couriers that Beleth had put into place throughout the Nine Hells and the mortal world. After a cursory interrogation in which she proved to her own satisfaction that he held no lingering loyalties to the displaced Malagarde, she allowed Beleth to resume his rank of viscount and his position of spymaster, this time in her own court.

It's a position that Beleth still holds today. On occasion, and with Glasya's tacit permission, he still takes on tasks for other devils if their offers of payment and favors are sufficient motivation. He still answers sporadic mortal summons personally, though he sends minions to respond to most. And rumor holds that Beleth occasionally reports on Glasya's activities to her father—but then, even the prideful daughter of the King of the Nine Hells could hardly blame any devil for following the dictates of Asmodeus.

Beleth's Goals

In the broadest sense, Beleth's goals are the same as most other high-ranking devils: to obtain more power, more minions, and more souls for the Nine Hells.

Specifically, Beleth continues to use his favored tools to accomplish this: his spies who can gather almost any piece of information, given sufficient time; his messengers, who not only report but occasionally change missives between devils; and, with increasing frequency, his rapport with, and loyalty among, an ever-growing number of cults, cabals, and covens across the world.

The Natural World

Beleth approaches the acquisition of mortal souls as an exercise in quantity over quality. The world's mightiest evildoers and most ambitious apostates call upon devils far greater than he—Mephistopheles, Belial, Levistus, and Asmodeus. Competition with these powers would be both futile and foolish. Instead, Beleth focuses his efforts on far less potent casters: the young wizard acquiring his first familiar or the coven gathered together to raise their first devil. These souls are far less valuable to his kind, but so many more of them exist. Indeed, it is this practice that bestowed upon Beleth his most commonly used and infamous title, "the Witch's Viscount."

As stated previously, Beleth and his minions were among the most frequent responders to mortal summons in the earliest days of the Nine Hells, and this granted Beleth a unique opportunity to change the summoning rituals that would be passed on to apprentices and future generations. Into many of these rituals, the viscount worked variations on his own name, and the names of his most loyal vassals. The result of this tampering carried on through the centuries and still manifests today: Several such rituals "default" to calling upon Beleth or the imps that serve him. Any time a caster summons an imp and does not specify the name of either that imp or that imp's diabolic master, the odds are good that the rite calls upon one of Beleth's servitors in favor of an imp loyal to any other devil.

And since many a low-level diabolist summons an imp before moving on to ever greater devils, Beleth's collection of souls, and his eyes and ears in the natural world, grow ever wider.

Covens, Not Cults

Few true cults are devoted to Beleth. When so many diabolists gather, they invariably grant their devotion either to devils of far greater power and infamy, or—on rarer occasions—to weaker devils that the cult leader believes he can bend to his whim.

Instead, as mentioned above, many of Beleth's petitioners are individual casters, or those who gather in smaller groups such as warlock cabals and witch's covens. These groups, most of which average seven

Sample Gathering: The Black Moss Coven

In many regions, moss that has turned an unhealthy dark gray or black is known as "witch's hair," and it suggests an area cursed by dark magic. In the depths of the Fenreach—a swampy isthmus the size of a small continent—a coven of witches have adopted that name for their own, and they work to increase their own wealth at the expense of their neighbors, with the aid of the Prince of Imps.

The Fenreach stands as the link between two larger continents, and several rivers flow largely unseen through its otherwise stagnant waters. Merchant vessels hire native guides to direct them through those rivers, for sailing across the Fenreach is weeks faster, if not months, than circumnavigating the landmasses to which it is attached. Yet those rivers are all but impossible for outsiders to locate, and they are difficult even for the natives to find. Many shipwrecks throughout the Fenreach—some of which serve as small villages for natives and sailors stranded here—are a testament to that difficulty.

With the aid of their own magic, and the eyes and ears of Beleth's invisible imps, the Black Moss witches learn whenever a rich vessel seeks passage through the Fenreach. Through intimidation and magical coercion, the witches force the hired guides to lead such ships astray, running them aground in the foul swamp. From there, the witches can either demand a ransom to allow the crew to survive, or else sacrifice them in Beleth's name, leaving their bodies to beasts of the swamp, and making off with the riches aboard the vessel.

Many locals know of the Black Moss Coven, yet they are too terrified of their unnatural powers to approach their domain, let alone attempt to stop them. Yet if left unchecked, the coven's activities could destroy several of the Fenreach communities, whose economies depend either on the monies earned for guiding these vessels, or trade with the ships as they pass through the murky swamp.

The Black Moss Coven is led by a female half-elf warlock namedAnnelaise Dulaire. Most of its members are human or half-elf warlocks or wizards, but the coven is known to contain at least one true monster as well: Irvmuldre, a bog hag who serves as Annelaise's advisor.

to thirteen members, hold little power in their communities, and they must either keep themselves secret to avoid persecution, or else display sufficient power to terrify their neighbors into granting them a wide berth. These covens call upon Beleth primarily to grant them familiars and other servitor devils, favors that the Prince of Imps is only too happy to grant. On occasion, Beleth might appear to such covens directly to ensure their loyalties, to engage in carnal relations with a petitioner, or to claim a particularly valuable sacrifice.

Although a few other devils compete for the worship of these witches and hedge wizards, Beleth's primary rival for their worship and adoration comes from the Abyss. The demon lord Graz'zt is also a frequent patron of covens and cabals, and the minions and servitors of both powers have done so on a number of occasions. Those covens that seek greater power to curse and destroy are drawn toward Graz'zt, while those who seek to connive, to enrich themselves, or to influence their neighbors are more attracted to Beleth. (These are, of course, mere generalities, not hard and fast rules.)

The Hierarchy of the Nine Hells

When it comes to the acquisition of status among his fellow devils, Beleth's methods and advantages are rather broader than that of other devils.

His position as Glasya's spymaster grants him a degree of authority and safety he could acquire almost nowhere else. Glasya keeps Beleth busy gathering information on a number of devils, many of whom are fearful of striking back at him lest they incur the wrath of Glasya—or her father.

Although much of this information goes directly to Glasya, Beleth also keeps secrets to himself. As befits a ranking devil, the Witch's Viscount has great skill at interpreting the strict letter of his orders. Every piece of information his spies unearth that pertains to Glasya and her interests, he passes along immediately. But anything else is subject to intense scrutiny first, and if Beleth doesn't feel that he's duty-bound to pass that information along—if, for instance, it doesn't appear to be anything of immediate importance to Asmodeus's daughter—he doesn't feel obliged to reveal it.

The Prince of Imps still finds the occasional opportunity to hire out his services, and his spy network, to other devils. Glasya permits him to do so, as long as he never prioritizes those efforts above her own commands, and with the understanding that he'll turn over anything he happens to uncover in the process that could work to her benefit. Most archdevils are reluctant to employ him since they are uncertain where his loyalties lie, but the opportunity to learn the plans and hidden weaknesses of a rival is too tempting to pass up.

Beleth's position as Glasya's spymaster grants him a degree of authority and safety he could acquire almost nowhere else.

When undertaking one of these tasks, Beleth has only one inviolate rule: Any information an employer gives him is sacrosanct for 100 years. Beleth does not offer that information to any future employer, no matter the price, until that period has expired. It seems an oddly honorable policy for a devil, until one realizes that without such assurances, nobody would employ his services, for fear that he would immediately share what he learned of one employer to the next. (If he is indeed spying on Glasya for Asmodeus, as some rumors claim, this must be an exception to this so-called "iron clad" rule. . . . But again, who can blame a devil for obeying Asmodeus above all other concerns?)

Finally, Beleth's duties to Glasya specifically involve spying on and sabotaging her rivals' activities *within* the Nine Hells. Any information he acquires from his covens and summoned imps in the mortal world, and any souls he drags to the Nine Hells, are entirely his to do with—or to sell and trade—as he pleases. Given the interest so many devils hold in the mortal realms, this grants Beleth quite a bit of currency that he can use to increase his standing.

But what does Beleth ultimately hope to accomplish? For centuries and longer, he has gathered "dirt" on nearly every noble in the Nine Hells, from the archdukes down to the lowliest knights who command a single company. He has traded information for political favors, many of which still hang over the heads of other devils as lingering debts. Although none but Beleth knows the full extent of his influence, this simple viscount might well be able to exert substantial pressures on devils many ranks higher than he.

And this, in fact, is the Prince of Imps' objective. Although he craves power, he doesn't *want* the position of archduke and doesn't want a layer of his own. Beleth would rather be kingmaker than king—a lesser target for rivals, uprising, and assassination. Some day, Beleth hopes to hold sufficient influence that he can rule entire regions of the Nine Hells, not overtly, but as the power behind a puppet throne. And none of the devils of the Nine Hells can honestly claim to know how close to that goal Beleth may be.

Beleth, the Witch's Viscount

Master of Secrets and Prince of Imps, Beleth comes across as one of the most easygoing and least ambitious of devils, content with his lot. It's all a façade, of course, but it is one that—like so many others—the Witch's Viscount is an expert at projecting.

Description

When first encountered, Beleth is normally cloaked in his human form—"Leaving my devil in the wardrobe," as he is fond of saying. He appears as a slightly gaunt man, just passing middle age. His piercing blue eyes stare out from a clean-shaven face, which is pale but tinged slightly red as though he'd been out and about in the sun. He wears a black leather overcoat atop a black vest—cinched tight with a silver-buckled belt—and a white tunic. Graying hair hangs loose from beneath a black, broad-brimmed hat, and he carries a mahogany walking stick topped with a golden sphere.

His transformation to diabolic form is swift and sudden. His cloak unfolds into a pair of batlike wings; the cane flexes, winding and extending back behind him to become his tail, even as the sphere warps into a barbed stinger. The hat dissolves away into his hair, revealing a pair of small horns, and his teeth and nails grow long and gray.

Beleth **Level 26 Solo Skirmisher (Leader)**
Medium immortal humanoid (devil) XP 45,000

Initiative +23 **Senses** Perception +26; darkvision
From All Sides aura 10; allied devils within the area may spend a move action, on their turn, to teleport a number of squares equal to their base speed or base fly speed (whichever is higher).
HP 1,205; **Bloodied** 602
AC 44; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 42, **Will** 42
Resist 35 fire, 20 poison
Saving Throws +5
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover), teleport 4
Action Points 2

⊕ **Infernal Sting** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Fire, Poison**
+31 vs. AC; 2d12 + 6 damage, and Beleth makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack*: +29 vs. Fortitude, and ongoing 15 fire and poison damage and target is immobilized (save ends both).

Hellish Salvo (standard; at-will) ✦ **Teleportation**
Beleth makes an *infernal sting* attack against a target and can teleport 2 squares after the attack. Beleth can then make another *infernal sting* attack against a different target and teleport 2 squares after that attack. Then, an ally with 5 squares of Beleth's final destination can make a melee basic attack and teleport 2 squares after its attack.

Brimstone Cloud (move action; recharge ⚅) ✦ **Teleportation**
Beleth teleports 10 squares, leaving a brimstone cloud behind in a close burst 3, centered on the square he left; +29 vs. Fortitude; slowed until save.

Infernal Escape (*immediate reaction*, when first bloodied; encounter)
Beleth's *brimstone cloud* recharges automatically, and he uses it immediately.

Vanish (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion**
Beleth becomes invisible until he attacks. (If Beleth is mounted, he can apply this ability to his mount as well.)

Diabolic Telesthesia
Beleth can read the minds of any allied devil of lower level within 20 squares of him. Any place such a devil can see is considered within line of sight for Beleth's teleportation.

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**
Beleth can alter his physical form to appear as any Small or Medium humanoid, including a unique individual (see Change Shape, page 280 in the *Monster Manual*). The human form described above is his favored shape, and best known to his covens, but he assumes whatever shape is appropriate to the circumstances.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Supernal, telepathy 20
Skills Arcana +28, Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Insight +26, Perception +26

Str 22 (+19)	**Dex** 27 (+21)	**Wis** 26 (+21)
Con 25 (+20)	**Int** 30 (+23)	**Cha** 30 (+23)

Tactics

Beleth prefers not to fight at all; if he lacks sufficient information to extort a foe into backing down, he believes that he's already lost the first battle. That said, when cornered or enraged, the Prince of Imps is a brutal foe indeed. He prefers to fight alongside allies, directing them with telepathic abilities if they are of a diabolic nature. He fights by using *hellish salvos* with his mightiest ally, moving out of troubling situations by using *brimstone cloud* and then going invisible to better position himself for an attack. When necessary, he might depart combat.

When he fights in his favored human form, he can use his sting attack without it appearing as more than a blow with his walking stick. Since his walking stick is his disguised tail, it cannot be disarmed or taken from him.

Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Religion check.

DC 20: Beleth, called the Witch's Viscount and Prince of Imps, is a lesser noble in the service of Glasya, Archduchess of Malbolge.

DC 25: The Witch's Viscount is an accomplished deceiver and shapechanger. It is said that he commands the loyalty of many small diabolic cabals and witches' covens, and that he has imp spies all over the world and in the courts of many powerful devils.

Beleth can communicate telepathically with other devils, and he uses this power to gain reports from his minions, ensuring that they leave nothing out and that nobody can eavesdrop on them.

DC 30 With this result, the PC knows all the basics as presented in the History section (although the DM is encouraged to omit a few specific details if they seem like the sort of thing that wouldn't become known to even expert mortal students of the occult).

Encounter Groups

Beleth is rarely encountered alone. At the very least, he's surrounded by a horde of imps, though most such devils have little influence in a combat against foes of Beleth's own power level.

Great Coven, Encounter Level 29 (XP 79,400): Beleth has been summoned personally by one of his most potent covens.

- Beleth, the Witch's Viscount (level 26 solo skirmisher)
- Alzach (level 23 elite soldier)
- 2 NPC wizards (level 24 controller)
- 2 NPC warlocks (level 24 striker)

Journey Through the Nine Hells (Level 29, XP 78,200): When traveling between the courts of the Nine Hells' nobles, or leading his forces into battle directly, Beleth prefers a specific array of companions, with invisible imps scouting the way.

- Beleth, the Witch's Viscount (level 26 solo skirmisher)
- Alzach (level 23 elite soldier)
- 4 war devils (level 22 brute)
- 8 legion devil legionnaires (level 21 minion)

Enemies, Allies, and Minions

Through his spy network, Beleth has links to almost every major devil. Still, where most of them are concerned, the Witch's Viscount is neither a major rival nor a vital ally, but merely another devil who could prove either pawn or problem. The following text references only those devils with whom Beleth has a particularly strong relationship, positive or negative.

The Dukes of the Nine Hells

Beleth's strongest ally among the highest nobles of the Nine Hells is Glasya. As her spymaster, Beleth can count on a high degree of cooperation, support, and protection from the daughter of Asmodeus—as long as he continues to serve her interests.

Of all the other archdukes, the paranoid and insular Dispater employs Beleth's services most frequently. Rumor has it that he wishes to entice Beleth to abandon Glasya entirely and enter his services full time. Bel occasionally employs the Prince of Imps as a means of learning what the other archdukes—all of whom are older and more powerful than he—are planning. And Levistus sometimes employs Beleth to learn more of what's occurring in the the natural world.

On the other hand, Baalzebul despises Beleth, for Baalzebul was also caught up in, and punished for, the same revolt against Asmodeus during which Beleth betrayed Moloch. Belial and Fierna, allies of Baalzebul, follow his lead. And of course the exiled Moloch, though no longer technically an archduke, schemes to return to power—and no doubt the destruction of his betrayers is high on his list of priorities.

Lesser Devils

Beleth's closest allies are his lieutenants, who are devils who serve in his court and help manage his military units and his network of spies. Of course, knowing full well the power of altered messages and orders, Beleth frequently checks on his minions to make certain they are passing along his commands untainted. These lieutenants include the following:

- General Baraddal (a war devil with the battle champion template), Beleth's battlefield commander.

✦ Baron Uzendiun (a 22nd level bone devil with the demagogue template), who is second-in-command of the spy network.

✦ Alzach, Beleth's closest companion (see below).

Among his forces, Beleth counts ten companies of bearded devils, eight companies of bone devils, four companies of chain devils, four companies of war devils, and twelve companies of legion devils. Although not nearly comparable to the forces that more warlike devils can field, it's impressive enough that his own territories cannot easily be invaded.

In nonmilitary forces, he commands the equivalent of five companies of succubi. The greatest amount of his influence, however, comes from imps of various sorts—the equivalent of no fewer than eighty companies.

Imps

It would be inaccurate to say that the so-called "Prince of Imps" commands *all* these minute devils, or even a majority of them. Many hundreds serve other devils faithfully and in great numbers. However, no other devil—besides, perhaps Asmodeus—can claim to exercise direct command over as many imps as can Beleth.

Of greater import is the fact that only a small proportion of Beleth's imps are based in his own terrain. Most are scattered throughout the Nine Hells, in service to other devils, or active on the mortal realm as familiars and advisors to many a witch or wizard. It is this wide scattering of imps that grants Beleth his spy ring, and that so greatly worries his rivals—for no devil can be certain how many of "his" imps report to the Witch's Viscount or might be changing orders to Beleth's benefit.

In addition to the standard imp, much of Beleth's court and spy ring consists of other types—including the assassin imp presented below.

Alzach

The greatest of Beleth's servants, the devil Alzach is both an enigma and a power in his own right. The most powerful of Beleth's minions before the fall, he has long remained the viscount's loyal lieutenant. More than that, however, he is one of Beleth's secret weapons—for few devils recognize him for what he truly is.

Description

Alzach is an innate shapeshifter, with three forms available to him. None but Beleth, a few of the viscount's highest lieutenants, and possibly Glasya, know that each of these forms represents a single devil. All others believe that "Alzach" is three separate individuals, which is a misconception that Beleth and Alzach take pains to cultivate.

His "native" form is that of an imp with strangely mottled skin that ranges from dark gray to sickly purple. This is the form that everyone knows as "Alzach," one of Beleth's most potent and loyal vassals. In this form, Alzach is Tiny.

The form in which Alzach spends most of his time is that of a powerful white warhorse. This heavily muscled charger is clad in black barding. Its teeth are jagged and razor-edged, its hooves shod in black iron, and its eyes glow a malevolent green. In this form, Alzach serves as Beleth's mount in combat and ceremony, and it is known by the name of Olqas. Alzach is a Large creature in this form.

Finally, Alzach can assume the form of a great worm. A sickly red-purple in hue, the worm has a foul, lampreylike fanged maw. Alzach bears no known name in this form; other devils assume that he's some foul beast that Beleth uses as both soldier and executioner. Again, Alzach is Large in this shape.

Alzach	**Level 23 Elite (See Below)**
Large or Tiny immortal beast (devil, shapechanger)	XP 10,200
Initiative +20	**Senses** Perception +18; darkvision
HP 440; **Bloodied** 220	
Resist 30 fire	
Action Points 1	
☽ **Road to Hell** (minor; recharge ⚄ ⚅) ✦ **Teleport**	
Ranged 10; +28 vs. Will; target teleports 5 squares (to a safe square of Alzach's choosing), and the target is knocked prone.	
Vanish (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion**	
Alzach becomes invisible until the end of his next turn or until he he attacks. Alzach can use this power only in imp form, though he remains invisible if he later changes shape.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ✦ **Polymorph**	
Alzach can alter his physical form to take on one of three shapes: imp, horse, and worm. All three shapes have the same abilities except where noted (see Change Shape, page 280 in the *Monster Manual*).	
Skills Bluff +23, Endurance +25	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Supernal
Str 26 (+19)	**Dex** 25 (+18) **Wis** 24 (+18)
Con 28 (+20)	**Int** 20 (+16) **Cha** 24 (+18)

Imp Form (Skirmisher)
AC 39; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 36
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)
⊕ **Sting** (standard; at-will)
+28 vs. AC; 1d12 + 8 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 damage. Alzach can shift 1 square after the attack.
⸸ **Diabolic Assault** (standard; at-will)
Alzach makes two sting attacks. If both strike the same target, the target is knocked prone.

Horse Form (Soldier)
AC 41; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 36
Speed 12
⊕ **Kick** (standard; at-will)
+30 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Alzach's next turn.
⸸ **Diabolic Assault** (standard; at-will)
Alzach makes two kick ttacks. If both strike the same target, the target is knocked prone.
⸸ **Trample** (standard; at-will)
Alzach can move up to his speed and enter enemies' spaces. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks, and Alzach must end his move in an unoccupied space. Once per turn, when Alzach enters an enemy's space, Alzach makes a trample attack; +26 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 8 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Worm Form (Soldier)
AC 41; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 36
Speed 6, burrow 6
⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
+30 vs. AC; 2d12 + 8 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 damage and the target is knocked prone.
Earthen Maw
Against a prone enemy, Alzach's bite attack also weakens the enemy until the end of that enemy's next turn.

Tactics

Alzach prefers to play with his opponents, making them believe they are in battle with more foes than they truly face. He changes shapes to bring new attacks to bear, especially when one is more appropriate to the circumstances. In imp form, he moves in and out of invisibility as circumstances allow, while in warhorse form he acts as an unintelligent but highly trained mount and companion to Beleth.

Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Religion check. No check result reveals that Alzach's three forms are one creature—nobody outside the Nine Hells has this information.

DC 20: Alzach is one of the eldest of the imps, and he serves as the chief lieutenant to Beleth, the Witch's Viscount.

DC 25: Beleth's mount is a creature called Olqas, a demonic warhorse of terrifying power.

DC 30: Sometimes, Beleth unleashes a horrific wormlike creature in combat, a foul monstrosity that consumes the fallen. He's also been known to use it as an executioner.

Assassin Imp

The varieties of imps in the Nine Hells has yet to be fully tallied. More of the vile creatures seem to emerge from the pits each day, much to Beleth's delight, but the assassin imps are some of the deadliest in the Viscount's service. These murderous creature, even more than most imps, delight in the slaughter of helpless innocents. They especially favor sending those souls already pledged to their infernal master on their way, but their wicked glee in bloodletting is such that they will happily pursue any target they are sent to eliminate.

Description

The assassin imp looks like other imps. It stands 2 feet tall, and it possesses leathery wings, a stinger-tipped tail, and a mouth full of wickedly sharp teeth. Its scales are almost jet-black in hue, however, as opposed to the standard red. A long, raspy tongue runs across ivory white teeth, and it clutches a vicious blade in one hand.

Assassin Imp **Level 7 Lurker**
Tiny immortal humanoid (devil) XP 600
Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31
AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19
Resist 15 fire
Speed 4, fly 7 (hover)
⊕ **Razor** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.
⊕ **Tail Sting** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the imp makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +10 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target falls asleep for 1 hour or until woken. Poison damage from this attack does not wake a sleeping creature.
Vanish (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion**
The imp becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it attacks.
Quick Escape (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)
The imp uses *vanish* as an immediate reaction.
Bleed the Helpless
When the assassin imp attacks a sleeping or helpless target, its razor attack deals +2d6 damage and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Supernal
Skills Bluff +9, Perception +12, Stealth +13
Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+8) **Wis** 18 (+7)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 14 (+5) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Assassin Imp Murder Lord	**Level 13 Lurker**
Tiny immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 1,600
Initiative +16	**Senses** Perception +16; darkvision
HP 102 **Bloodied** 51	
AC 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 25	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 4, fly 7 (hover)	
⨺ **Razor** (standard; at-will)	
+18 vs. AC; 2d4 + 6 damage.	
⨽ **Tail Sting** (standard; at-will) ✦ **Poison**	
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the imp makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +10 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends both). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target falls asleep for 1 hour or until woken. Poison damage from this attack does not wake a sleeping creature.	
Cut and Run (free; at-will) ✦ **Teleport**	
When the imp attacks from invisibility and hits, it can teleport 6 squares as a free action.	
Fade Away (standard; at-will) ✦ **Illusion**	
The imp becomes invisible, and it gains the insubstantial and phasing qualities until the end of its next turn or until it attacks.	
Quick Escape (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)	
The imp uses *fade away*.	
Bleed the Helpless	
When the assassin imp attacks a sleeping or helpless target, its *razor* attack deals +2d6 damage and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).	
Alignment Evil	**Languages** Common, Supernal
Skills Bluff +13, Perception +16, Stealth +17	
Str 15 (+8)	**Dex** 23 (+12) **Wis** 21 (+11)
Con 18 (+10)	**Int** 15 (+8) **Cha** 15 (+8)

Tactics

As befits the name, assassin imps prefer slaughtering helpless targets. They enjoy waking their victims to pain and blood, only to put them to sleep a moment later with a tail sting. Assassin imps often work in groups or as the vanguard for an assault. If they *must* engage a waking target, they attempt to put foes to sleep. Only if a target proves resistant to the poison does the imp move back in and begin making attacks with both tail and razor. (Some assassin imps carry tiny daggers, while others use jagged bits of scrap metal, but most prefer straight razors.)

Assassin imps enjoy waking their victims to pain and blood, only to put them to sleep a moment later with a tail sting.

Lore

A character knows the following information with a successful Religion check.

DC 15: This is a variety of imp called an assassin imp, which specializes in slaughtering helpless foes. They are often sent to eliminate enemies of diabolists and devil cults.

DC 20: If it catches a foe by surprise or unawares, the imp can maintain its sting for a second or so longer than normal. This injects a virulent poison that causes the target to become drowsy, and possibly even fall asleep.

About the Author

Ari Marmell has been shirking homework in favor of playing **D&D** since he was nine years old. Thankfully, he now works in the industry, since shirking work for gaming tends to wreak havoc with the bills. He has written for quite a few of the industry's major companies, including White Wolf and, of course, Wizards of the Coast.

Character Concepts

by Peter Schaefer

illustrations by Michael Komarck

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SO WHAT HAPPENS if you forgot to create a character for the gaming session that's about to start and you need one right away? What if you're a guest to the game who just happens to need a quick character for a high-level 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons game, which starts less than an hour from now? Or maybe you're a Dungeon Master who wants to demonstrate the archetypal characters you can make with 4th Edition D&D. Perhaps you're someone who wonders how to make that classic character from your favorite fantasy movie. If you're any of these people, you might find what you need right here. Each "Character Concepts" article picks an iconic heroic image or a strong character theme and lays out a path of character advancement, from level 1 to 30, which shows you how to achieve and maintain that character type.

In this inaugural article, we'll look at the familiar warrior-wizard, who fights off foes with sword and shield while throwing blasts of thunder and sprays of magical light. As a warrior-wizard, your fighting prowess allows you to use close and area attacks to mark multiple targets

at once, which can give you a huge advantage in combat situations. But, is there a school that teaches this intermingling, or is it a departure from accepted practice? You could wait for the swordmage in the *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, but that class provides a different feel altogether. Because several D&D players have been trying to build this character effectively since the elf was a class, this month's "Character Concept" article shows you how to build it in 4th Edition.

Before we examine the warrior-wizard we'll take a look at the concept of a character who uses teleportation to good effect in combat. In general, teleportation is a facet of 4th Edition that many find enchanting. Why walk to the bar when you can teleport there and back? Traversing intervening space is for chumps. This second concept embraces this philosophy and shows you a character designed to have the maximum number of teleports available, and, when possible, allows her to use teleportation against her enemies.

Feanan the Teleporter

Fourth Edition provides access to quite a range of short-range teleportation options. Popping in and out of rooms! Hopping across the battlefield while laughing at enemies and the laws of physics! The idea is delightful, so developing a *maximum teleport* hero seemed like a fun exercise.

Race: To maximize teleportation, only one race will do. The eladrin comes with *fey step*, a per-encounter teleport of 5 squares. The boosts to Intelligence and Dexterity, plus the additional skill, help the character get the most out of teleportation, as you'll soon see.

Class: To avoid walking as much as possible, the fey pact warlock is the class of choice. Its pact gives Feanan the Misty Step boon, which lets the character teleport 3 squares each time a creature under its Warlock's Curse is reduced to 0 hits points or fewer. These free teleports are bound to happen at least once per fight and might happen even more frequently.

Ability Scores: Charisma is the key attack ability for a fey pact warlock, so Feananwant to keep that highest. Constitution is the warlock's backup attack ability and useful for some powers, whereas Dexterity is relevant to skill choices. Intelligence is important for Feanan, though; it beefs up some warlock powers and unlocks a feat that will mesh well with the build. The final tally is **Strength 10, Constitution 14, Dexterity 14*, Intelligence 15*, Wisdom 11, Charisma 16**.

* Race modifier included.

Skills: None of these are too relevant to the teleporter, but some are still useful. **History** takes advantage of high Intelligence and the eladrin skill modifier. **Bluff** and **Intimidate** are useful for any high-Charisma character. Finally, **Thievery** seems perfect for a fey pact warlock of naturally mischievous temperament. The eladrin race lets Feanan pick one more: **Stealth**—which capitalizes on the character's Dexterity. When you can teleport, it seems useful to confuse people about where you are. **Arcana** opens up rituals and long-distance teleportation later on, but Feanan doesn't need to start with it.

Feats: At 1st level, Feanan can choose only one feat, and there's no contest. With her Intelligence at 15, Feanan qualifies for **Improved Misty Step**, which extends her free teleport from 3 to 5 squares. It's like getting to use *fey step* over and over for free. Of course, Feanan has to rely on an exterior trigger to use it, but nothing's perfect!

Powers: A couple of choices have to be made here. Feanan automatically receives *eldritch blast* and *eyebite*, which are dictated by her class and choice of pact. *Eyebite* is particularly useful to a teleporting character: After becoming invisible, a quick teleport ensures that the opponent has no clue where to look for her.

None of the 1st-level encounter or daily powers deal with teleportation, so Feana picks up *witchfire* (warlock encounter) and *dread star* (warlock daily). The latter is star pact, but it helps keep an enemy away and weakens them against *eyebite*.

Equipment: Feanan needs an implement, so she gets her a wand. She also takes leather armor, a longsword as backup (which she can wield since she is an eladrin), and assorted traveling gear. As for magic equipment, she'll be collecting it as she goes up in level, so some attractive choices will be noted after all the leveling up is done.

Level 2: She gains *ethereal stride* (warlock utility) for a teleport of 3 squares each encounter. Plus, the power increases her defenses. The fact that it is part of the star pact in no way diminishes its usefulness. As a feat, Improved Initiative means she can worry less that a monster is going to drop without Feanan's Warlock's Curse on it.

Level 3: *Otherwind stride* (warlock encounter) is a real prize. The close burst immobilizes foes while Feanan teleports 7 squares to get the hell out of Dodge. Her fey pact boosts the teleport distance from 5 to 7 squares (by her Intelligence modifier).

Level 4: +1 Charisma (now at 17) and +1 Intelligence (now at 16). These two ability scores should be boosted at every opportunity. Charisma is core to the class, and Intelligence improves Feanan's teleports. It's also important because of her feat this level: Arcane Initiate, the wizard multiclassing feat. High Intelligence supports her few wizard powers. She especially wants those that let her teleport. The feat comes with training in Arcana and *magic missile* (wizard at-will originally) as an encounter power.

Another option is to increase Dexterity rather than Intelligence, which makes this a stealthy character and a skilled thief, which fits well with teleportation. Feanan could combine this with multiclassing into rogue for a few helpful Stealth-based powers. That said, wizard makes more sense for the build because Feanan wants all the teleportation she can.

Level 5: *Curse of the bloody fangs* (warlock daily) doesn't teleport, but it deals some serious damage.

Level 6: This is a great level. Not only does Feanan have the opportunity to teleport out of danger, she can teleport a friend into danger! (She hopes that friend

is a fighter or a paladin.) *Fey switch* (warlock utility) lets her switch places with a willing ally—emphasis on willing. Feanan's feat this level is Alertness.

Level 7: *Mire the mind* (warlock encounter) functions like an improved *eyebite* for Feanan and all her friends. There's no teleport, but it can serve Feanan well.

Level 8: +1 Charisma (18), +1 Intelligence (17). The feat choice is Ritual Caster, for the very important reason that Linked Portal is a level 8 ritual. Feanan will purchase the ritual ASAP.

Level 9: *Summons of Khirad* (warlock daily) comes with a couple of hitches: It teleports an enemy *to* Feanan rather than taking her away, and it attacks with Constitution. The first is bad unless Feanan has allies waiting to pound the guy, and the second is bad because she wasn't built with high-Constitution powers in mind. This attack is already two points below where its attack bonus should be at this level, and it's only going to get worse. The best bet is to use this on big, dumb brutes with low Will Defenses and swap it out for a power she can use more accurately later on.

Level 10: This is another great level. *Warlock's leap* (warlock utility) is a teleport of 6 squares that, unlike almost every other teleport, does *not* require line of sight to the destination. This is how Feanan can escape any jail cell and slip into heavily guarded fortresses, and she's extremely pleased to get it. It is, however, a daily power. Feanan takes Skill Focus (Stealth), which can help her keep up with the high-Dexterity sneakers.

Status Report: How is the maximum teleport character coming along? She teleports 5 squares each time an enemy Feanan has cursed drops to 0 hit points, which could be at least once per fight (unless she's truly unlucky). She has four teleports during each encounter, and each ranges from 3 to 7 squares in distance—plus one of them is an attack. Once a day Feanan can teleport without caring about line of sight, and once a day she can grab a low-Will foe and teleport him near to Feanan (and hopefully into a cluster of her buddies). But she's just getting started.

At-Will Powers: Eldritch blast (warlock 1), *eyebite* (warlock 1).

Encounter Powers: Witchfire (warlock 1), *otherwind stride* (warlock 3), *magic missile* (wizard 1), *mire the mind* (warlock 7).

Daily Powers: Dread star (warlock 1), *curse of the bloody fangs* (warlock 5), *summons of Khirad* (warlock 9).

Utility Powers: Ethereal stride (warlock 2), *fey switch* (warlock 6), *warlock's leap* (warlock 10).

Feats: Improved Misty Step, Improved Initiative, Arcane Initiate, Alertness, Ritual Caster, Skill Focus (Stealth).

Level 11: +1 to all abilities. This means Intelligence reaches 18 and Wisdom reaches 12. It's also time to choose a paragon path, and Feanan chooses the Feytouched.

This path is custom made for the teleporter. Apart from Feytouched Action (+4 to attacks when you spend an action point), Feanan gains Slashing Wake, which deals her Intelligence modifier in damage (currently 4) to all enemies adjacent to her when she teleports. Since she teleports at least four times an encounter, that's pretty exciting. It also provides *will of the Feywild* (feytouched encounter attack 11), which lets Feanan teleport an enemy 5 squares and forces him to attack the creature she places him beside. The feat this level is Feywild Protection, which gives her a +2 bonus to defenses for the round after using *fey step*.

Level 12: The paragon utility power is *twilight teleport* (feytouched utility), which lets Feanan teleport a creature into the space of a cursed foe who drops to 0 hit points. The feat this level is Twofold Curse, which allows Feanan to target two people each time she uses the Warlock's Curse. The real benefit to this is that it doubles the chance that, when someone goes down, she can use Misty Step. And with her other teleports, she's almost guaranteed to curse two new targets each round.

Level 13: *Bewitching whispers* (warlock encounter) includes no teleport, but it's the only Charisma-based attack power at this level. It replaces *witchfire* (warlock attack 1).

Level 14: +1 Charisma (20), +1 Intelligence (19). Point-Blank Shot is a feat every warlock wants eventually, and Feanan takes it now.

Level 15: *Curse of the golden mist* (warlock daily) is another case of the only Charisma-based attack power. It replaces *dread star*.

Level 16: *Infuriating elusiveness* (warlock utility) lets Feanan turn invisible for a round and teleport 4 squares. The best part is that, as a move action, she can immediately use another teleport (even an attack teleport) to confuse her enemies. Improved Second Wind helps her stay alive.

She also receives Patron's Favor, the feytouched level 16 feature. It replaces Misty Step with a die roll for special effects, which includes a 50% chance she teleports 10 squares instead of 5. This is *great*!

Level 17: None of the powers are particularly compelling here. Normally, *thirsting tendrils* (warlock encounter) would replace *mire the mind*; instead, Feanan keeps *mire the mind* because of the invisibility it grants her. She replaces *bewitching whispers* instead.

Level 18: +1 Charisma (21), +1 Intelligence (20). Great Fortitude shores up Feanan's weak Fortitude defense. At this level, she also picks up the Planar Portal ritual so she can use planar teleports.

Level 19: *Wrath of Acamar* (warlock daily) isn't the sort of teleportation that fits this build—it yanks the target onto another plane and then back into the same location—but sending a victim into a realm of indescribable horror seems worthwhile. It replaces *curse of the bloody fangs*.

Level 20: To cap the feytouched paragon path, Feanan receives *whispers of the fey* (feytouched daily). Iron Will boosts her Will defense to fantastic levels.

Status Report: Feanan has all the teleport powers she had at level 10, plus she damages all adjacent enemies each time she teleports, approximately half her Misty Steps are teleports of 10 squares instead of 5 squares, she teleports and becomes invisible every encounter, she teleports an enemy 5 squares each encounter, and she can teleport friends or enemies atop the bodies of her fallen cursed foes as a daily power. That's a total of five personal teleports each encounter plus Misty Step and one daily, and teleporting enemies once an encounter and twice a day (one of those can be a friend, if she likes).

It seems Feanan spent most of the paragon levels trying not to give up what she got in the first ten levels. She has improved some of her nonteleport attack powers, but there aren't enough teleport powers to replace the ones she already has. The attack powers she leveled up do a decent job of dishing out appropriate damage and effects, and the fact that Feanan is doing damage to every adjacent enemy around her every time she teleports (which should be every round) should help make up for it. But it will be worth looking at powers from future supplements once they hit the shelves.

At-Will Powers: Eldritch blast (warlock 1), *eyebite* (warlock 1).

Encounter Powers: Otherwind stride (warlock 3), *mire the mind* (warlock 7), *will of the Feywild* (warlock 11), *thirsting tendrils* (warlock 17).

Daily Powers: Summons of Khirad (warlock 1), *curse of the golden mist* (warlock 15), *wrath of Acamar* (warlock 19), *whispers of the fey* (warlock 20).

Utility Powers: Ethereal stride (warlock 2), *fey switch* (warlock 6), *warlock's leap* (warlock 10), *twilight teleport* (warlock 12), *infuriating elusiveness* (warlock 16).

Feats: Improved Misty Step, Improved Initiative, Arcane Initiate, Alertness, Ritual Caster, Skill Focus (Stealth), Feywild Protection, Twofold Curse, Point-Blank Shot, Improved Second Wind, Great Fortitude, Iron Will.

Level 21: +1 to all abilities (relevant updates: Strength 12, Constitution 16, Dexterity 16, Charisma 22). Now it's time to choose an epic destiny. Remember Arcane Initiate? Here's why it fits with Feanan. She goes for archmage as her epic destiny. Its feature is Spell Recall, which allows her to cast one daily spell twice a day. She can choose a different power each day, but in general her choice is clear: *warlock's leap* (warlock utility), so Feanan now has two blind teleports each day. Epic Resurgence is her feat choice so she can recover spent teleports when she scores a critical hit.

Level 22: Feanan's utility power is *raven's glamor* (warlock utility), a teleport of 20 squares that simultaneously turns her invisible and leaves an illusion in her place to fool her enemies. Better, she can sustain the invisibility. Lightning Reflexes is the feat of choice. Feanan isn't interested in Arcane Mastery, even though she qualifies, because it won't recharge Feanan's teleports—it just deals with her wizard powers.

Level 23: *Dark transport* (warlock encounter) replaces *thirsting tendrils*. This hurts the target and lets Feanan teleport into his space and send him to hers—the perfect way to surround him with Feanan's friends or foil an escape!

Level 24: +1 Charisma (23) and Intelligence (22). Feanan gets Arcane Spirit from the archmage epic destiny and takes Danger Sense.

Level 25: *Curse of the twin princes* (warlock daily) is the only Charisma attack power this level. It replaces *curse of the golden mist*; normally replacing *summons of Khirad* would make the most sense, but with maximum battlefield teleports as a goal, she holds onto that one.

Level 26: Feanan gains *shape magic* from her epic destiny. Once per day, she regains an arcane power. Since all her powers are arcane, this means she can perform another teleport whenever she wants. It could be an encounter power in an emergency, but it's much more likely to be a daily. She picks up Devastating Critical so she can lay out a little more smack.

Level 27: *Curse of the fey king* (warlock encounter) isn't a teleport power, but it gives Feanan a greater chance of getting *dark transport* off when she wants to transpose with an enemy. It replaces *mire the mind*, which is by now a little long in the tooth.

Level 28: +1 Charisma (24), +1 Wisdom (14). Normally Intelligence would get a bump, but this is Feanan's last ability boost, and taking Intelligence to 23 won't do anything for her (and Wisdom is the only ability that 1 point improves). She chooses the feat Adept Power, which lets Feanan change out *wrath of Acamar* for *disintegrate* (wizard daily 19). She's giving up a power that teleports an enemy for one that doesn't, but that will change. Also, she grabs the True Portal ritual.

Level 29: *Disintegrate* didn't last long. Feanan trades it *back* for *wrath of Acamar*. Then she trades out *curse of the twin princes* for *elemental maw* (wizard

Multiclassing Note

Some teleportation powers in the game don't belong to the warlock, and Feanan wants them. They aren't all appropriate, though. The cleric sends people to the Astral Sea for healing, and the paladin takes allies places to protect them, which does not fit for this character. But the wizard's teleports are much more sensible.

If the character was being built using the swordmage, forthcoming in the Forgotten Realms setting, Feanan might multiclass into that, instead. It has some great teleport powers, and it works well with a high Intelligence character.

encounter 25), which sucks people into a vortex and teleports them to where Feanan wants them, within 20 squares of her. Now *that's* some serious teleportation! While Feanan is at level 29, she also gets *curse of the dark delirium* (warlock daily). There's no teleport, but her teleporting lusts have been sated for this level.

Level 30: The Archspell feature lets Feanan choose one daily spell and make it an encounter spell. She almost selects *warlock's leap* (warlock utility 10), but Feanan has enough teleports to keep her busy through an entire encounter. Instead, it feels right to use *elemental maw* every encounter and toss her opponents through space willy-nilly. The feat this level is another difficult choice, but she decides on Acolyte Power, which allows Feanan to replace a warlock utility with a wizard utility. She changes out *raven's glamor*. The spell is good, but she want maximum frequency of teleports for *everyone*, so she's forced to replace it with *arcane gate* (wizard utility 10), which lets Feanan connect 2 squares between her and her allies.

Status Report: Feanan can use Misty Step multiple times an encounter, which is a teleport of 5 squares half the time and a teleport of 10 squares the other half of the time (with other possible boons to choose from), plus she can teleport herself six times each encounter (two of these are attacks). She teleports three more times daily (twice regardless of line of sight twice a day thanks to *warlock's leap* plus Spell Recall), she teleports her enemies into the Far Realm and hurls them all about every encounter with *elemental maw*—though she could pick *warlock's leap* if she wanted to avoid being stuck. To cap it all off, Feanan can open portals to anyplace she can imagine *and* connect nearby squares with *arcane gate* for all of her friends once a day.

At-Will Powers: Eldritch blast (warlock 1), *eyebite* (warlock 1).

Encounter Powers: Otherwind stride (warlock 3), *will of the Feywild* (warlock 11), *dark transport* (warlock 23), *curse of the fey king* (warlock 27), *elemental maw* (wizard 25).

Daily Powers: Summons of Khirad (warlock 1), *wrath of Acamar* (warlock 19), *whispers of the fey* (warlock 20), *curse of the dark delirium* (warlock 29).

Utility Powers: Ethereal stride (warlock 2), *fey switch* (warlock 6), *warlock's leap* (warlock 10), *twilight teleport* (warlock 12), *infuriating elusiveness* (warlock 16), *arcane gate* (wizard 10).

Feats: Improved Misty Step, Improved Initiative, Arcane Initiate, Alertness, Ritual Caster, Skill Focus (Stealth), Feywild Protection, Twofold Curse, Point-Blank Shot, Improved Second Wind, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Epic Resurgence, Lightning Reflexes, Danger Sense, Devastating Critical, Adept Power, Acolyte Power.

Desired Magic Items: Eladrin boots (level 16) increase the distance of all Feanan's teleports by 2 squares *and* give her an additional daily teleport of up to 5 squares. The *guardian's cape* (level 20+) lets her teleport to change places with an ally, ignoring line of effect. The *star opal ring* (level 26) gives her a daily teleport that comes with a burst attack. Most importantly, the *rod of harvest* lets her capture her Misty Steps and use them when Feanan wants minor actions; this greatly improves the control she has over her teleports. She can even keep one Misty Step from the end of the last combat ready for the next! As a backup for use with her wizard powers, she keeps a wand that holds a teleporting encounter power—*otherwind stride* at low levels up through *dark transport* at the highest levels. She keeps in mind that *dimensional shackles* (level 17) deny teleportation and are her worst enemies.

Germaine the Fighter-Mage

The warrior-wizard is a staple in fantasy—a character who devotes himself to both the art of magic and the way of the sword. Dungeons & Dragons has had difficulty rendering this character in the past. Now, a mix of sword and sorcery works, and this concept will show you how.

Race: Both Intelligence and Strength need to be high for this character build, so a race that boosts one or the other is a must. Though a couple possibilities exist—the dragonborn boosts Strength, the tiefling boosts Intelligence, and the eladrin boosts both—the human seems like a solid choice. He'll use his racial ability score bump in Intelligence, and the extra versatility from being human will prove valuable.

Class: This is a tricky question: Does the character start with fighter or wizard? It turns out that the fighter's ability to mark enemies, to stop their movement, and to constantly boost accuracy is more useful than Arcane Implement Mastery, cantrips, Ritual Casting, and a spellbook. Germaine can have Ritual Caster as a feat later, and while cantrips are cool, Germaine needs to be *effective* more than *colorful*. Germain's Fighter Weapon Talent will be used with one-handed weapons, so he can keep a wand in his other hand.

Ability Scores: Germaine needs Strength and Intelligence to be as high as possible. Although it's tempting to make Dexterity Germaine's secondary ability, Wisdom can help him more. So what if he's not likeable? The final tally is **Strength 16, Constitution 12, Dexterity 10*, Intelligence 16*, Wisdom 13,** and **Charisma 11**. Germaine has a low Will defense until he starts selecting feats, but we'll mitigate that a little down the road. Plus, he gets his human defense bonuses!

* Race modifier included.

Skills: Athletics, **Endurance**, and **Heal**. For his human bonus skill, we'll go with Intimidate. Even though he doesn't have a great Charisma score, it's always good to have a social skill to fall back on in "delicate" situations. Germaine can receive **Arcana** from . . .

Feats: Arcane Initiate gives Germaine the Arcana skill and a once-per-encounter *magic missile*.

This is the first step in multiclassing. With his human bonus feat, Germaine takes Human Perseverance. While it doesn't help the build, +1 on all saving throws is just a solid all-around choice.

Powers: *Cleave* (fighter at-will), *tide of iron* (fighter at-will), and *sure strike* (fighter at-will) for his bonus human power. *Covering attack* (fighter encounter) as Germaine's encounter power lets him shift friends out of the way before he lets loose a wizard's blast, and *villain's menace* (fighter daily) helps him fight a foe with either magic or muscle.

Equipment: Longsword, heavy shield, scale armor, supplies, and a rudimentary wand.

Now to start looking at Germaine as he begins to climb up the levels. Hit points won't be added up here, nor will level modifier to checks be factored in. Those are automatic for the most part; Germaine's build is focused on picking out feats and powers, along with a paragon path and an epic destiny.

Level 2: *Get over here* pulls Germaine's enemies in close, which is good for a fighter, and it can combo well with the close blasts he should soon have as a wizard. He gains Ritual Caster as his feat, since he wants to be as wizardly as possible.

Level 3: *Sweeping blow* (fighter encounter) ties in nicely with Germaine's longsword.

Level 4: +1 Strength (17), +1 Intelligence (17). Germaine takes Novice Power and trades in *covering attack* for his first wizard attack power. Because Germaine will be in melee combat most of the time, he needs to have an attack that doesn't provoke opportunity attacks. *Burning hands* (wizard encounter) fills that demand with a whole lot of fire.

Level 5: *Rain of steel* (fighter daily) lets Germaine lash out with his sword even while he is trying to focus on incantations.

Level 6: At this point, Germaine would like a little help keeping enemies off his back on the off chance he needs some space to cast a non-close spell. Shield Push fits the bill. Germaine takes *unbreakable* (fighter utility) to help keep him alive.

Level 7: *Come and get it* (fighter encounter) lets Germaine draw in enemies for a good blast with *color spray* (wizard encounter) on his next turn. Oh, this is the first mention of *color spray*? This is one of the tricks of multiclassing: With each new level, you can swap powers in and out to make sure that your character's multiclass powers are (if you choose) nearly his most powerful attacks. Germaine has traded out *burning hands* for *covering attack* (that's the "gain back" part described on page 209 of the *Player's Handbook*), and then traded out *sweeping blow* for *color spray*. Germaine's wizard spells need to be as up-to-date as possible, so he will be doing this a lot.

Level 8: +1 Strength (18) and +1 Intelligence (18). Germaine gets Acolyte Power for the feat, and he uses it to trade in *get over here* for *shield* (wizard utility). As much as *get over here* worked well with the build, Germaine will keep *shield*. When a *fighter* needs +4 to his Armor Class, he *really* needs it.

Level 9: *Thicket of blades* (fighter daily) slows everyone Germaine hits, and hopefully that keeps them in range for his wizard blasts.

Level 10: Adept Power lets Germaine trade out a daily power. He's finally getting into the big wizard spells. He can trade out *rain of steel* for one of two serious choices here: *Bigby's icy grasp* or *web*. *Fireball* is a classic, but it only deals damage. He wants to tie controller and defender together for maximum synergy. In the end, *web* (wizard daily) lets Germaine perform better crowd control, and it ties in with Combat Superiority very well—Germaine has a chance to pin down anyone who tries to struggle free of the web, and he can even use *tide of iron* to push people into it.

He also receives a utility power, which means he can reshuffle his wizard utility. While wizards have neat powers at level 6, *shield* seems like a stronger choice. Germaine opts for *stalwart guard* (fighter utility).

Status Report: Germaine has two fighter encounter powers and one wizard encounter power (plus a wizard at-will he uses as an encounter power); two fighter utility powers and one wizard utility power; two fighter daily powers and one wizard daily power. It seems like he is more fighter than wizard . . . and that's about to change. Paragon tier is when multiclassing comes into its own.

At-Will Powers: Cleave (fighter 1), *sure strike* (fighter 1), *tide of iron* (fighter 1).

Encounter Powers: Covering attack (fighter 1), *magic missile** (wizard 1), *color spray* (wizard 3), *come and get it* (fighter 7).

Daily Powers: Villain's menace (fighter 1), *web* (wizard 5), *thicket of blades* (fighter 9).

Utility Powers: Shield (wizard 2), *unbreakable* (fighter 6), *stalwart guard* (fighter 10).

Feats: Acolyte Power, Adept Power, Arcane Initiate, Human Perseverance, Novice Power, Ritual Caster, Shield Push.

Level 11: +1 to all ability scores. Wisdom hits 14 and Charisma hits 12. The feat Germaine immediately wants is Iron Will, which should help make up for the fact that he didn't receive a wizard's defense bonus. *Sure strike* is replaced with *thunderwave* (wizard at-will); it's the only close wizard at-will power, and Germaine can use it to push enemies away from his allies. Finally, Germaine gets a wizard encounter power from level 7. None of them are close powers, but *winter's wrath* (wizard encounter) lets Germaine pin enemies down in its area, just like *web* does. As for paragon paths, wizard of the spiral tower looks like a good bet. It fits really well with the character concept.

Level 12: The Resounding Thunder feat lets Germaine increase the size of the *thunderwave* he picked up last level. He also gets *blur* (wizard utility), which is great when he needs a little help keeping the evil hordes off his friends.

Level 13: *Storm of blows* (fighter encounter) is Germaine's 13th-level fighter power, and it replaces *covering attack*. His wizard encounter powers at this level remain untouched, because there aren't any close attacks.

Level 14: +1 Strength (20), +1 Intelligence (20). Germaine gets Weapon Focus (heavy blades), which he's been wanting since early heroic tier (but he just hasn't had the feat space).

Level 15: *Unyielding avalanche* (fighter daily) replaces *villain's menace*. Germaine now trades back *web* for *rain of steel* and trades out *thicket of blades* for *wall of fire* (wizard daily). Now Germaine can corner his enemies in fiery hallways of his own creation!

Level 16: Germaine gains *interposing shield* (fighter 16) to help him protect his friends. He is still not giving up *shield*, though. He also finally takes Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword). It's just better than the longsword.

Level 17: This is a key level. Germaine trades back *color spray* to take *sweeping blow*. Then he replaces *sweeping blow* with *warrior's challenge* (fighter utility), a new power at this level that focuses enemies on him so Germaine can blast them with *thunderlance*, which he takes when he trades out *storm of blows*. By the way, Germaine can use *thunderwave* without provoking an opportunity attack and improve it with Resounding Thunder.

Level 18: +1 Strength (21), +1 Intelligence (21). Armor Specialization (scale) improves his Armor Class and speed.

Level 19: *Strike of the watchful guard* (fighter daily) is a good ally-protecting power. It replaces *rain of steel* while he simultaneously trades out *unyielding avalanche* for *prismatic beams* (wizard daily) and trades back *wall of fire* to take *thicket of blades*.

Level 20: The Devastating Critical feat comes in handy, especially with all the attack rolls Germaine's area-based powers let him make. He gets *acid wave* (wizard daily) from paragon multiclassing. It's a close attack spell that covers Germaine's enemies, appropriately enough, with burning acid. It was a close race with *Evard's black tentacles*, which appeals to the defender side of the character, but he's looking for a flat-out wash of pain.

Status Report: Two fighter at-will power, one wizard at-will power; two fighter encounter powers, two wizard encounter powers (plus *magic missile*, again); two fighter daily powers, two wizard daily powers; three fighter utility powers, two wizard utility powers. Germaine is pretty evenly balanced with a bunch of area-based powers, and he can use almost all of them at close range without provoking opportunity attacks. The assortment of powers is going to stay about balanced except for utility powers, since Germaine will pick up a couple more from the fighter's lists over the next ten levels.

At-Will Powers: Cleave (fighter 1), *thunderwave* (wizard 1), *tide of iron* (fighter 1).

*Encounter Powers: Magic missile** (wizard 1), *winter's wrath* (wizard 7), *come and get it* (fighter 7), *thunderlance* (wizard 13), *warrior's challenge* (fighter 17).

Daily Powers: Thicket of blades (fighter 9), *prismatic beams* (wizard 15), *strike of the watchful guard* (fighter 19), *acid wave* (wizard 19).

Utility Powers: Shield (wizard 2), *unbreakable* (fighter 6), *stalwart guard* (fighter 10), *blur* (wizard 10), *interposing shield* (fighter 16).

Feats: Acolyte Power, Adept Power, Arcane Initiate, Armor Specialization (scale), Devastating Critical, Human Perseverance, Iron Will, Novice Power, Resounding Thunder, Ritual Caster, Shield Push, Weapon Focus (heavy blades), Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword).

Level 21: +1 to all ability scores. Strength hits 22, Intelligence hits 22, and Constitution and Dexterity hit 14. And it's epic destiny time! Germaine becomes an eternal seeker, gaining Seeker of the Many Paths, which allows him to choose encounter and daily powers from any class when he gains levels. Now his

highest-level power *can* be a wizard power if he wants. He takes Epic Resurgence as his feat; getting an encounter power back is always good.

Level 22: Being an eternal seeker lets Germaine round out his wizard utility powers: He gets *mass fly* (wizard utility), mostly because it's *awesome*. He chooses Fleet Footed as his feat, which gives him a little extra boost in speed.

Level 23: *Warrior's urging* (fighter encounter) is another power that sucks in enemies for an all-round attack and sets them up for a *thunderlance* on Germaine's next turn or with an action point. It replaces *come and get it*. He keeps *thunderlance* rather than move it up; keeping Germaine's wizard powers as close attacks is better than keeping them at the highest possible level.

Level 24: +1 Strength (23), +1 Intelligence (23). The Spell Accuracy feat allows Germaine to leave squares out of his close and area attacks, which is great when he's in the fray trying to protect his allies. He also gains Eternal Action, which lets his action points do double duty.

Level 25: *Reaper's stance* (fighter daily) replaces *thicket of blades* because it's hard to argue with automatic damage *and* automatic ongoing 10. Germaine keeps his other daily powers where they are, though he's once again tempted by *Evard's black tentacles*.

Level 26: Seeker's Lore lets Germaine pick one 22nd-level utility power from any class. The best choice here is *own the battlefield* (warlord utility 22). It lets Germaine slide just about all the enemies on the field a number of squares up to Germaine's *Intelligence* modifier, which is +6 right now and will soon be +7. It supplements Germaine's control of the battlefield very well. The Heavy Blade Mastery feat helps Germaine score more critical hits (and thus more uses out of Epic Resurgence).

Level 27: Germaine gets *black fire* (wizard encounter), a souped-up *burning hands*, as a 27th-level spell. It replaces *thunderlance*.

Level 28: +1 Strength (24), +1 Intelligence (24). Solid Sound gives Germaine a boost whenever he uses a thunder power.

Level 29: *No mercy* (fighter daily) is the epitome of sheer fighter brutality, and it replaces *strike of the watchful guard*. There just aren't enough close wizard powers at this tier, but Germaine is still capable of dishing out some sword-and-sorcery hurt.

Level 30: As a Seeker of the Many Paths, he can choose a 24th-level feature from any other epic destiny (if Germaine meets the qualifications). Germaine goes with Divine Recovery, which provides automatic healing when Germaine hits 0 hit points. Germaine will likely take a lot of hits on the front lines. Arcane Spirit, the archmage feature at that level, is a choice that would emphasize Germaine's arcane half. Germaine goes with Blind-Fight for the feat at that level.

Status Report: Germaine has a mess of powers on both sides of the fence, now: two fighter encounter powers, two wizard encounter powers (and *magic missile* as an encounter power). Two fighter daily powers, two wizard daily powers. Three wizard utility powers, three fighter utility powers, and one warlord utility power (kind of incidental, that). Seven feats have been invested in getting Germaine's wizard half (five if you don't count Ritual Caster or Iron Will), four feats improve Germaine's wizard half, three or four add to his fighter side, and several that help just about any class. This is one of the costs of full-time multiclassing.

At-Will Powers: Cleave (fighter 1), *thunderwave* (wizard 1), *tide of iron* (fighter 1).

*Encounter Powers: Magic missile** (wizard 1), *winter's wrath* (wizard 7), *warrior's challenge* (fighter 17), *warrior's urging* (fighter 23), *black fire* (wizard 27).

Daily Powers: Prismatic beams (wizard 15), *acid wave* (wizard 19), *reaper's stance* (fighter 25), *no mercy* (fighter 29).

Utility Powers: Shield (wizard 2), *unbreakable* (fighter 6), *stalwart guard* (fighter 10), *blur* (wizard 10), *interposing shield* (fighter 16), *mass fly* (wizard 22), *own the battlefield (warlord 22)*.

Feats: Acolyte Power, Adept Power, Arcane Initiate, Armor Specialization (scale), Blind-Fight, Devastating Critical, Epic Resurgence, Fleet-Footed, Heavy Blade Mastery, Human Perseverance, Iron Will, Novice Power, Resounding Thunder, Ritual Caster, Shield Push, Solid Sound, Spell Accuracy, Weapon Focus (heavy blades), Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword).

Desired Magic Items: Any magic scale armor works: *trollskin armor* looks nice. A *dancing bastard sword* is great for Germaine, since it keeps attacking when he pulls out his wand to lay down heavy fire. The *staff of the war mage* or the *thunderwave staff* are both good choices for a fighter-wizard, but a staff seems a little unwieldy. It's easier to go for a wand with a good close attack, such as *burning hands* or *thunderlance*, so Germaine has it when he needs it, or with the *orb of invasive fortune*. A *shield of deflection* forces foes to come close where he can whack or blast them. *Gauntlets of the ram* and *shadowfell gloves* are both good hand slot items. In the end, nothing really screams as a perfect match for this character—he just wants a balance of magic-enhancing and melee-enhancing fun.

About the Author

By night, Peter Schaefer drives his armor-plated, solar wind-powered tank through the ranks of the evil yak-men who fight to crush all that right-thinking humans hold dear. His only ally and secret sponsor in this vigilantism is Griselda, the Heirophant Mercurial who supports Peter with high-tech toys and subtle magics from her position within the secret world government in Taipei. Decipher his rebellious code by visiting Gleemax and join the fight.

Bazaar of the Bizarre

The Treasures of Ashardalon

by Robert J. Schwalb

illustrations by John Moriarty

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FEW CAN IGNORE the legacy of the mighty red dragon Ashardalon. Ancient even by the standards of dragonkind, he was a force for evil in the world—his ferocity and greed was unmatched by any of his kin. Even when the great druid Dydd put down the beast, ending his reign of terror, Ashardalon rose from the ashes of his grave once more, bolstered by his wickedness and by fell pacts made with dread abominations. Although we can rest easy in the knowledge that the menace posed by this beast is no more (or so we hope), Ashardalon remains a cause of wonder and speculation. Aside from his many exploits, the dragon was a great collector of magic relics, trinkets, and items of considerable power.

The items presented here include some of the more famous treasures recovered from his lair at one time or another. Of these items, many Ashardalon seized during his life, but most are the leavings of those adventurers who sought to test their mettle against the beast . . . but were found wanting.

Armor

Ashardalon's hoard included a wide range of armors, most of which were collected from adventurers he slew. Although he had little use for the armor, he did enjoy arranging them, with the corpses still inside, around his lair in dramatic poses.

Dragonclaw Armor — Level 4+

Sharp talons curl out from between the folds of this suit of armor.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	**Lvl 19**	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	**Lvl 24**	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	**Lvl 29**	+6	2,625,000 gp

Armor: Leather, Hide
Enhancement: AC
Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when another creature grabs you. You immediately use the escape action with a +5 bonus to escape the grab and deal 5 damage to the creature that grabbed you.
Level 14 or 19: You deal 10 damage and gain a +10 bonus to your escape attempt.
Level 24 or 29: You deal 15 damage and gain a +10 bonus to your escape attempt.

Dragonrider Armor — Level 11+

Woven from old dragon scales, this armor is lightweight and warm to the touch.

Lvl 11	+3	9,000 gp	**Lvl 21**	+5	225,000 gp
Lvl 16	+4	45,000 gp	**Lvl 26**	+6	1,125,000 gp

Armor: Scale
Enhancement: AC
Property: When mounted on a dragon, you gain the dragon's resistances.
Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when you fall. You take no damage from the fall, regardless of the distance fallen, and you are not prone at the end of the fall.

Fortified Armor — Level 9+

This armor is of dwarven make and bears runes of strength and power.

Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	**Lvl 24**	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	**Lvl 29**	+6	2,625,000 gp
Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp			

Armor: Plate
Enhancement: AC
Property: You gain a bonus to saving throws against fear equal to the armor's enhancement bonus.
Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. This power triggers when you are hit by a power with the fear keyword that can be ended with a save. Roll a saving throw against that effect with a +5 bonus. Regardless of the outcome of the saving throw, you also gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Immolating Armor — Level 7+

The steel components of this heavy armor are chased in red enamel, with tints of yellow and orange swirled throughout it.

Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	**Lvl 22**	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	**Lvl 27**	+6	1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp			

Armor: Chain, Scale
Enhancement: AC
Power (Daily ✦ Fire): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when you are marked. End this condition and the creature that marked you takes 5 fire damage.

Rimewrought Armor — Level 12+

Fashioned from blue-tinted steel, this armor is cool to the touch.

Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	**Lvl 22**	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp	**Lvl 27**	+6	1,625,000 gp

Armor: Scale, Plate
Enhancement: AC
Property: Resist 10 cold.
Level 22 or 27: Resist 15 cold.
Property: Ignore difficult terrain caused by ice or snow.

Weapons

Many would-be slayers of Ashardalon entered his lair, armed with fabulous swords, axes, and a myriad of other weapons. Although few of these dragonslayers found these tools of use in their doomed battles against the red wyrm, Ashardalon thought enough of them to pluck them from their smoking corpses and preserve them for study.

Final Word Weapon — Level 5+

Etched into the weapon's blade are profound curses and dire threats.

Lvl 5	+1	1,000 gp	**Lvl 20**	+4	125,000 gp
Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	**Lvl 25**	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	**Lvl 30**	+6	3,125,000 gp

Weapon: Axe, Heavy Blade
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. You can use this power when an enemy hits you with a melee attack. Make a melee basic attack with this weapon against the target that triggered this power.

Homing Weapon — Level 7+

A clockwork mechanism fitted with lenses, dials, and levers helps your aim.

Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	**Lvl 22**	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	**Lvl 27**	+6	1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp			

Weapon: Bow, Crossbow
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: Your attacks ignore penalties from concealment, though not from total concealment.
Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power before making the attack. Your attack ignores concealment and cover, but not total concealment or total cover.

Impaling Weapon — Level 4+

Scored and scratched as it is, the weapon remains serviceable.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	**Lvl 19**	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	**Lvl 24**	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	**Lvl 29**	+6	2,625,000 gp

Weapon: Pick, Spear
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d8 damage per plus
Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with a melee attack using this weapon. You and your target are both immobilized until the start of your next turn.

Mind-Rending Weapon — Level 13+

The blade has an unnerving purple hue that seems somehow wrong.

Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	**Lvl 23**	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp	**Lvl 28**	+6	2,125,000 gp

Weapon: Heavy Blade, Light Blade
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with an attack using this weapon. In addition to the attack's normal damage, the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Relentless Weapon — Level 2+

The weapon thrums in your hands, as if eager to see battle.

Lvl 2	+1	520 gp	**Lvl 17**	+4	65,000 gp
Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	**Lvl 22**	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	**Lvl 27**	+6	1,625,000 gp

Weapon: Flail, Hammer, Mace
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: Whenever you score a critical hit with this weapon, the target is also knocked prone.

Vitriolic Weapon — Level 3+

Black, scaly hide covers the weapon's grip and the steel has a greenish cast.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	**Lvl 18**	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	**Lvl 23**	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	**Lvl 28**	+6	2,125,000 gp

Weapon: Flail, Hammer, Mace
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 acid damage per plus
Power (Daily ✦ Acid): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with an attack using this weapon. All creatures adjacent to the target take acid damage equal to the weapon's enhancement bonus.

Symbols

Over the centuries of Ashardalon's life, foolish mortals sought out the dragon to kill it—or to worship it. Whether from the dead hands of one seeking the dragon's death or the hands of one who gave up worshiping a deity to follow Ashardalon, these symbols remained behind for the dragon to gloat over when he wished.

Symbol of Courage — Level 9+

You draw strength from your pious devotion, which allows you to stand fast in the face of any terror.

Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	**Lvl 24**	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	**Lvl 29**	+6	2,625,000 gp
Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp			

Implement (Holy Symbol)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: You and all allies within 5 squares of you gain an item bonus to saving throws against fear effects equal to the symbol's enhancement bonus.
Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. You can use this power when an enemy hits you with a power that has the fear keyword. You can make an immediate saving throw against the effect.

Symbol of Excellence — Level 2+

Your devotion to your divine patron inspires others to attain the heights of excellence.

Lvl 2	+1	520 gp	**Lvl 17**	+4	65,000 gp
Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	**Lvl 22**	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	**Lvl 27**	+6	1,625,000 gp

Implement (Holy Symbol)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily): Minor Action. Grant one ally within 10 squares of you a power bonus to his or her next attack roll, ability check, or skill check equal to the symbol's enhancement bonus.

Symbol of the Dragon — Level 3+

This symbol shields you from dragons' attacks.

Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	**Lvl 23**	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp	**Lvl 28**	+6	2,125,000 gp

Implement (Holy Symbol)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. You can use this power when an enemy attacks an ally within 5 squares of you with a power with the acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder keywords. The ally gains resist 5 against that keyword until the end of the encounter.

Level 23 or 28: Ally gains resist 10.

Orbs

As a dabbler in the arcane arts, Ashardalon had an interest in magic implements, specifically orbs. When he ranged about the countryside in search of food and plunder, he was sure to include a wizard's tower in his explorations.

Orb of Inexplicable Contention — Level 8+

Armed with this orb, you can twist the minds of those who oppose you, causing them to turn against their allies.

Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	**Lvl 23**	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	**Lvl 28**	+6	2,125,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp			

Implement (Orb)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily ✦ Charm): Free Action. Use this power when you damage an enemy with an attack. The enemy makes a basic attack as a free action with a power bonus equal to the orb's enhancement bonus against one of its adjacent allies.

Orb of Fiery Condemnation — Level 5+

Enemies you face have a habit of exploding into fire.

Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	**Lvl 25**	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp	**Lvl 30**	+6	3,125,000 gp

Implement (Orb)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 fire damage per plus
Power (Daily ✦ Fire): Free Action. Use this power when you deal fire damage to an enemy. That enemy takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Orb of Temporal Dissonance — Level 13+

You can cause a hiccup in time to give your allies a tactical advantage.

Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	**Lvl 23**	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp	**Lvl 28**	+6	2,125,000 gp

Implement (Orb)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily): Minor action. At the end of your turn, all combatants make initiative checks and the combat proceeds in the new order of initiative. You and all your allies gain an item bonus to the initiative check equal to the orb's enhancement bonus.

Rods

In ancient times, before the empire of Bael Turath fell to the swords and knives of the dragonborn, legend holds of warlocks who forged pacts with dragons, wherein they would serve their draconic masters much in the same way that infernal warlocks bargain with devils, and fey warlocks bind themselves to the spirits of the Feywild. Rumors persist that some of these warlocks roam the lands still, but most dismiss such notions as nonsense.

Rod of Baleful Geas — Level 11+

This bronze rod has a greenish hue.

Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	**Lvl 22**	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp	**Lvl 27**	+6	1,625,000 gp

Implement (Rod)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily ✦ Charm): Free Action. Choose one creature under your Warlock's Curse. Slide the target a number of squares equal to the rod's enhancement bonus and the target takes damage equal to your Warlock's Curse's extra damage.

Rod of Draconic Fury — Level 4+

This rod was carved from a mighty red dragon's talon.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	**Lvl 19**	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	**Lvl 24**	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	**Lvl 29**	+6	2,625,000 gp

Implement (Rod)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 fire damage per plus
Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when an enemy under your Warlock's Curse is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer. Instead of triggering your pact boon, you gain a +1 power bonus to your next attack roll.

Level 14 or 19: Gain a +2 power bonus.
Level 24 or 29: Gain a +3 power bonus.

Rod of the Dragon's Heart — Level 23+

An iron rod fitted with a small cage contains a glowing purple stone cut in the shape of a dragon's heart.

Lvl 23 +5 425,000 gp **Lvl 28** +6 2,125,000 gp
Implement (Rod)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily ✦ Fear): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when an enemy under your Warlock's Curse is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer. You push all enemies adjacent to the triggering target a number of squares equal to the rod's enhancement bonus.

Staff

The only mortal to stand against the full might of Ashardalon was a druid named Dydd, and, if legends can be believed, he owed much of his success to a mysterious staff whose name and function have since been lost. Many builders of magic items have worked to recreate his chosen implement, basing their efforts on tales and myths, while others use such stories for new staffs of their own design.

Staff of Draconic Power — Level 5+

Razor sharp teeth emerge all along the length of this staff of fire-scorched wood.

Lvl 5 +1 1,000 gp **Lvl 20** +4 125,000 gp
Lvl 10 +2 5,000 gp **Lvl 25** +5 625,000 gp
Lvl 15 +3 25,000 gp **Lvl 30** +6 3,125,000 gp
Implement (Staff)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 fire damage per plus
Power (Daily ✦ Fire): Free Action. Use this power when you would use a power with the fire keyword. You gain resist 10 fire until the end of the encounter. After resolving the attack, you deal 1d8 fire damage to all creatures in a close burst 1.

Level 15 or 20: 2d8 fire damage.
Level 25 or 30: 3d8 fire damage.

Staff of Expansion — Level 2+

This collapsible pole is fashioned from a corroded copper pipe.

Lvl 2 +1 520 gp **Lvl 17** +4 65,000 gp
Lvl 7 +2 2,600 gp **Lvl 22** +5 325,000 gp
Lvl 12 +3 13,000 gp **Lvl 27** +6 1,625,000 gp
Implement (Staff)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d4 damage per plus
Power (Daily): Minor Action. Before the end of your next turn, the next close or area attack you make that has a burst area of effect gains a 1 square increase to the size of its burst.

Level 12 or 17: Increase the burst by 2.
Level 22 or 27: Increase the burst by 3.

Staff of Verdant Growth — Level 3+

This gnarled wooden staff grows leafy tendrils along its length when activated.

Lvl 3 +1 680 gp **Lvl 18** +4 85,000 gp
Lvl 8 +2 3,400 gp **Lvl 23** +5 425,000 gp
Lvl 13 +3 17,000 gp **Lvl 28** +6 2,125,000 gp
Implement (Staff)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Power (Daily ✦ Paralysis): Free Action. Use this power when you would use an area power. All creatures (including flying creatures) in the area of the power are slowed until the end of your next turn.

Arms

Many dragon-hunters swear by the virtues of a solid shield, but the battered devices found in Ashardalon's lair prove what one gets when relying too much on any single item.

Bracers of Escape — Level 7+

These bracers can whisk you out of harm's way.

Lvl 7 2,600 gp **Lvl 27** 1,625,000 gp
Lvl 17 65,000 gp
Item Slot: Arms
Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. You can use this power when you are the target of a melee attack. You teleport 2 squares.

Level 17: Teleport 5 squares.
Level 27: Teleport 10 squares.

The only mortal to stand against the full might of Ashardalon was a druid named Dydd, and, if legends can be believed, he owed much of his success to a mysterious staff whose name and function have since been lost.

Dragonscale Shield — Level 19+

A heavy shield fashioned from interlocking dragon scales.

Lvl 19 105,000 gp **Lvl 29** 2,625,000 gp
Item Slot: Arms
Property: Gain cover against all attacks that use a blast or burst area of effect.
Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when you are in the area of a blast attack. One ally in the area gains cover against the attack.

Level 29: All allies in the area gain cover.

Netherdark Shield — Level 14+

The black, scaly hide covering the face of the shield drinks in the light.

Lvl 13 17,000 gp **Lvl 23** 425,000 gp
Item Slot: Arms

Power (Daily ✦ Zone): Standard Action. You create a zone of darkness in a close burst 1 that lasts until the end of your next turn. The zone moves with you until the end of your next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures without darkvision or some other way to see in darkness except you. Any creature entirely within the area that does not have darkvision or some other way to see in darkness (except you) is blinded.

Level 23: You create a zone of darkness in a close burst 3.

Clothing and Jewelry

Rounding out Ashardalon's hoard were numerous chests of gold, mounds of gemstones, priceless statues, fine clothing, and finer jewelry, along with an equal amount of worthless junk. It took a keen eye to separate the treasure from the rubbish, and those who succeeded were rewarded well.

Feet

Earthwalker's Boots — Level 23

These heavy boots look to be fashioned from stone, but are as flexible as ordinary leather.

Item Slot: Feet 425,000 gp

Power (Daily): Move Action. You can burrow 5 squares. If you burrow, you gain combat advantage until the end of your current turn against any enemies that you end your move adjacent to.

Quickstride Boots — Level 12

Soft, supple boots of blue leather add spring to your step.

Item Slot: Feet 13,000 gp

Power (Daily): Minor Action. Move a number of squares equal to your speed.

Hands

Far Hand Gloves — Level 22

These black leather gloves have oddly long fingers.

Item Slot: Hands 325,000 gp

Power (Encounter): Free Action. Your reach increases by 1 square until the end of your current turn.

Head

Eyes of the Dragon — Level 23

These black goggles with crystal lenses fit snugly over your face.

Item Slot: Head 425,000 gp
Property: Gain a +6 item bonus to all Perception checks.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. Gain blindsight 5 until the end of the encounter.

Circlet of Clear Thought — Level 18

With this item, you can see through falsehoods and tricks with astonishing ease.

Item Slot: Head 85,000 gp
Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Insight checks.

Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when you are the target of a power with the charm keyword. You can immediately make a saving throw to negate its effect if it has an effect that ends with a save.

Mask of Terrors — Level 14

This green metal mask has a strip of studs that run down the center and end just above the nose.

Item Slot: Head 21,000 gp
Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Intimidate checks.

Power (Daily ✦ Fear): Free Action. Use this power when you damage an enemy with a melee attack. You push the target 3 squares.

Ruby Lenses — Level 14

These fine gold spectacles feature lenses of cut ruby.

Item Slot: Head 21,000 gp
Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Perception checks.

Power (Daily ✦ Charm): Free Action. Use this power when you damage an enemy with a ranged or area attack. You pull that enemy 3 squares.

Neck

Amulet of Scales — Level 13+

A fetish made from dragon scales and claws.

Lvl 13 +3 17,000 gp **Lvl 23** +5 425,000 gp
Lvl 18 +4 85,000 gp **Lvl 28** +6 2,125,000 gp
Item Slot: Neck
Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Power (Daily): Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when you are hit by an attack with a keyword. Gain resist 5 against this keyword until the end of the encounter.

Level 23 or 28: Gain resist 10.

Rings

Ring of Draconic Zeal — Level 18

This platinum ring gleams with crimson light.

Item Slot: Ring 85,000 gp
Property: Gain a +2 item bonus to Intimidate checks.

Power (Daily): Free Action. Make one basic attack.

Ring of the Ghost Knight — Level 24

This silver ring is inscribed with symbols of good gods.

Item Slot: Ring 525,000 gp
Property: Gain a +5 item bonus to saving throws against fear.
Power (Daily ✦ Conjuration, Fear): Standard Action. You gain concealment as billowing clouds of mist emerge from the ring. From these mists, you conjure the ghost knight. It occupies 1 square adjacent to you and moves with you. As a minor action, you can move the ghost knight to another adjacent square. The ghost knight (and the concealment) lasts until the end of the encounter. As a minor action, you can direct the knight to make a melee attack against a target adjacent to it. The attack bonus is equal to your level + 5 vs. Fortitude. On a hit, the attack deals 10 damage and pushes the target 1 square.

Waist

Belt of Lucky Strikes — Level 8

When wearing this belt, you can hit when you need to.

Item Slot: Waist 3,400 gp
Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you miss with a melee attack. Make a melee basic attack against the same target as the one you selected for the attack that missed.

Belt of Mountain Endurance — Level 18

The steel buckle of this leather belt is engraved with the image of a mountain.

Item Slot: Waist 85,000 gp
Property: When you spend a healing surge, you can add your Strength modifier to the surge value.
Power (Daily): Free Action. You can trigger this power when you spend an action point. You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of your next turn.

Wondrous Items

Finally, Ashardalon was keenly interested in unique and unusual treasure—objects many would call

wondrous items. He was ever fascinated by magical ingenuity of mortal wizards and rewarded the cleverest of them with a quick death as he made off with their works.

Flask of the Dragon's Breath — Level 3

This magic flask produces one dose of a fiery elixir each day.

Wondrous Item 680 gp
Power (Daily): Minor Action. Drink the elixir. At any point until the end of the encounter you can breathe fire, making a close blast 3 attack. The attack bonus is equal to your level + 5. On a hit, you deal 1d6 + your Constitution modifier fire damage.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb works as a freelance designer for Wizards of the Coast and has contributed design to such books as *Tyrants of the Nine Hells* and *Elder Evils*, and the forthcoming *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons*, *Manual of the Planes*, and *Demon Queen's Enclave*, as well as numerous articles for *D&D Insider*. Robert lives in Tennessee with his incredibly patient wife Stacee and his pride of half-dragon werecats.

Coils Below

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL

illustrations by Efrem Palacios and James Zhang

Snaketongue cultists are humans suborned by the doctrine of Zehir, the evil god of darkness, poison, and assassins. The cultists have fallen prey to the core tenants of the Coiled One, and as such they delight in the use of poison, adore snakes of every scale hue and size (especially yuan-ti), and kill in their god's name, offering each death as a sacrifice in long rituals or quick murders. Snaketongue cultists are so fevered in their worship that Zehir and allied yuan-ti reward them with ritual transformations, bestowing upon the cultists minor reptilian traits, which only increases their fanaticism and zeal to die in service to their god.

What if one cell of snaketongue cultists learned a degree of outward moderation in their devotion thanks to the schemes of a canny snaketongue high priest? What if this leader expanded his flock through deception rather than intimidation in an effort to gain so many converts that even officials of the local city were partly converted? Perhaps a PC's initial exposure to the "new faith" seems positive on its surface. Imagine still further that this faux-moderation was concocted as part of an effort to unbury an ancient relic below the city—a relic of interest to more than just snaketongue cultists. When confronted with the true doctrine behind the false, how do the heroes react?

This scenario is suitable for a group of 11th-level PCs.

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Chapel of the Golden Path

The Chapel of the Golden Path is rumored to lie beneath the city, and its location is a close-kept secret to all except those who've taken the doctrine of the golden path into their hearts.

In truth, the Chapel of the Golden Path is the name of merely the topmost series of chambers that is part of a much more massive temple buried below the city for an epoch or more. "Golden Path" is a name chosen merely to entice the uninitiated—the snake-tongue cultists who inhabit it and who continuously dig to unearth the chambers deeper down refer to the entire edifice as the Fane of Ophan.

Ophan is rumored to be one of the ancient primordials who opposed the gods when the world was new. The Fane served as one of her strongholds, where she marshaled ancient armies and launched devastating counterattacks against her divine foes. It was also where she eventually fell. It became her tomb, or so some lore tells. Those even aware of the structure's existence believe fantastic relics can be had within it, including the enigmatic Fang of Ophan.

Adventure Hooks

The snaketongue cultists continue to preach their sham called the "Golden Path" philosophy. At the same time they secretly steal away victims as part of their actual vile rituals. Eventually, people in the city are bound to notice, one way or the other.

Meanwhile, lesser treasures unearthed in the ongoing dig by the cultists are being sold in the city. Some nobles who fancy themselves as collectors of ancient art are in a tizzy to find more of these riches.

Coils Below is an adventure that can occur in any city, including the city of Fallcrest, which is described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Alternatively you can use a city from the Forgotten Realms or Eberron, or a city from your own campaign.

Church of the Golden Path: A peaceful sect of preachers has set themselves up in a small building somewhere in the city. Daily services are held there by hooded adherents who speak of inner peace, satisfaction, and happiness, which they believe comes about by the act of giving to others. No one in the city has heard of the Church of the Golden Path before, and a few of the more established churches have become annoyed after losing some of their wealthier church-goers to the newcomers. Perhaps one of the PCs is drawn to the new philosophy, finding it fresh and resonant. If not, then a friend or relative of one of the PCs might embrace it.

Disappeared: Several people, more than the normal number for a city this size, have gone missing. These missing people would have probably gone unnoticed by the wider populace, but for Janathar Hubbard's disappearance, too. Janathar is a local priest of Pelor popular for his rousing, if impromptu services. Janathar's family is offering a reward for information that leads to his discovery.

Baron Karond's Collection: The wealthy collector Baron Karond has an entire wing of his mansion set aside for various collections, which include ancient texts scribed in Draconic, tapestries of fallen Nerath, and Arkhosian sculpture. Recently, Karond snapped up a volume bound in snake scales with words penned in dried poison from a bookseller. The tome describes several particular ancient historical events, possibly referring to one or two ancient battles where god and primordial fought. Karond wants to discover where the volume originated, and moreover, if any sister tomes survive that he can add to his collection.

Explorers: Everyone in the city knows tunnels run beneath the city. Over the years, the tunnels have alternately hosted goblins, criminals, and for a brief time, a drow outpost. Vestiges of all these remain, and adventurers looking to make a name for themselves sometimes search for them, and for the Nerath Vault rumored to also lie below the city. These stories also claim that the vault has remained unopened since the fall of the empire of Nerath.

Investigation

Based on the hook used, the PCs can look into the problem in a variety of ways. For some of these, skill challenges help simulate investigation.

Church of the Golden Path

Those curious about the new philosophy taking the city by storm find it easy enough to find where the sect of preachers has set up (DC 10 Streetwise). A few hooded brothers are always around and willingly answer questions or give a quick sermon on how inner peace, satisfaction, and happiness can be found in giving to others. The hooded brothers in the rented surface temple are all true believers, recruited from the populace.

If a player attends more than a couple of sermons and displays real interest in learning more about the Golden Path, he or she is eventually invited to visit the main church: the Chapel. If a character accepts, he or she receives a map to the hidden temple and is told to ask for High Priest Nopaltzin upon arrival. Characters who follow the map plunge into one of the tunnels below the city; see Beneath the City Encounters for potential trouble along the way.

Disappeared People

Clues are scattered about the city, telling the tale of Janathar's Hubbard's disappearance—if you can fit them together.

The PCs are looking for Janathar Hubbard, a popular figure in town. If they can find out what happened to Hubbard, the PCs can find a route to the Chapel (which is where Hubbard ultimately ended up). This

skill challenge could take hours or even a few days in the game world.

Setup: To figure out what happened to Hubbard, PCs must go to places where Hubbard lived and was seen. Then they can question, examine, and investigate each lead or location thoroughly.

Level: Equal to the level of the party.

Complexity: 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Acrobatics or Athletics, Bluff, Perception, Streetwise, Insight.

Acrobatics or Athletics (moderate DCs): You slip into a back window in the structure that the Golden Path disciples are using for their services, with the intent to spy on the proceedings or otherwise gather secret intelligence. This skill use contributes up to one success to the challenge.

Bluff or Diplomacy (moderate DCs): You talk to the disciples and preachers at the rented structure where Golden Path sermons are given, and you convince them you are truly interested in learning more about the philosophy. You might also learn that Hubbard came here often, apparently curious to see if the Golden Path was an offshoot of Peloran mythology. However, none of the disciples know where Hubbard disappeared. This skill use contributes up to two successes to the challenge.

Perception (moderate DCs): You find that Hubbard's home bears no sign of forced entry or violence. Indeed, it shows signs of someone who purposefully and tidily packed up as if for a trip that he or she expected to last a few days. You find nothing odd or alarming in the structure rented by the disciples of the Golden Path, regardless of whether examining the main chamber or the back offices (after having slipped in using Acrobatics or Athletics). This skill use contributes up to three successes to the challenge.

Streetwise (moderate DCs): You find out where Hubbard was most often seen (his own church), where he lived (a modest apartment not far from his church), and the strangest place he was seen (attending a Golden Path service uptown). This skill use contributes up to three successes to the challenge.

Insight (moderate DCs): If talking with Golden Path disciples about the whereabouts of Janathar Hubbard, you learn that the disciples are not telling the whole truth when they say they have no idea where Hubbard might be. If you reveal this insight, the disciples break down and indicate that wherever Hubbard has gone to, he went of his own free will. After this, they say nothing more. This skill use contributes one success.

Religion, Intelligence, or Wisdom (moderate DCs): If it's true that Hubbard packed himself, or if he went somewhere of his own accord, he must have left some evidence behind regarding where he was going. Probably someone at his temple might know something. Even if PCs have talked to priests at the Pelor temple before now, they believe it might be worth a return trip. This skill use contributes one success.

Success: If PCs piece together the various clues, they not only learn that Hubbard chose to leave, but indeed he left behind a document in the temple. The junior minister who has it can be convinced by the PCs to give up a scroll case, which has a quickly scrawled document inside in Janathar's hand. The document provides rough directions to the Chapel of the Golden Path below the city, but it also indicates that the directions should not be given out to anybody. See Beneath the City Encounters.

Failure: The PCs suspect, from references the disciples let slip, that a great Chapel is somewhere below the city, but they gain no directions or map to help them find this place, which might contain Janathar. See Beneath the City Encounters

Baron Karond's Collection

The PCs are contacted by Baron Karond regarding a text he recently purchased. Titled *Ophan and the God Of Light,* the tome describes, in gruesome detail, a fight between a snake-scaled primordial named Ophan, and a proto-deity merely referred to as the Bright One.

Karond tells the PCs he purchased the tome from a bookseller called Radaur. From Radaur, the baron learned a group of adventurers calling themselves the Daggerhall Explorers sold him the book. Karond can't locate the Daggerhall Explorers—they're back under the city on some other adventure.

See the Daggerhall Explorers entry below if PCs want to look for this group on behalf of Karond.

Daggerhall Explorers

PCs who want to explore for likely dungeons below the city soon learn of the local "celebrity dungeoneers" called the Daggerhall Explorers, and their leader, Maze the Enchantress. Maze and her fellow adventures live in a decadent mansion called Daggerhall (DC 10 Streetwise). On the other hand, PCs might be told of the Explorers by Karond.

Anyone who wants to explore below the city can seek out the advice of the group that has been doing it for years. The Explorers sell knowledge of entrances into the tunnels below the city they've found in their own forays for a tiny finder's fee.

PCs who visit the Daggerhall discover the group has been gone for approximately one week, with no scheduled time of return known. Their home is locked tight.

Use the previous examples and the entry on skill challenges in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to design one of your challenges if PCs want to break into Daggerhall and discover where exactly in the miles of tunnel below the city the Explorers believe contains the best likelihood of treasure (or from where they found the tome Karond loves so much). A map in a secret safe in Daggerhall shows a route underground leading to something called "Ancient Snake Temple."

Beneath the City Encounters

Venturing below the city while seeking the Chapel of the Golden Path or the "Ancient Snake Temple" could lead to several encounters. One way to handle the PCs' progress toward their goal is a simple skill challenge that can lead to encounters, and, eventually to the Chapel/Ophan's Fane.

While adventuring below the city, PCs might meet Maze the Enchantress and the rest of the Daggerhall Explorers; see her NPC entry under Important Characters.

You enter one of the many tunnels that run below the city, your eyes wide for any clues or trails that can lead you more easily to your goal.

Setup: The PCs must make their way below the city to find the Chapel of the Golden Path.

Level: Equal to the level of the party.

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Perception.

Perception (hard DCs): You try to follow twists and turns, rumors of the temple's location, and occasional tracks of previous creatures who have traveled to and from the Chapel. Four successes lead you to the old ziggurat, but a failure causes you to go off track and triggers an encounter with the Daggerhall Explorers.

Special: If the PCs have a map or written directions from any source showing the location of the "snake temple" or the Chapel of the Golden Path, they gain a +5 bonus to all skill checks.

Success: PCs discover the Chapel of the Golden Path after a few hours of travel.

Failure: The PCs go off track and run into trouble. Once PCs deal with the combat encounter described below, they can attempt the skill challenge again to discover their true goal.

Each additional failure doesn't necessarily indicate a new encounter, though it could at your option (pull something out of the *Monster Manual* of a level appropriate to the PCs). However, each failure means the PCs spend another day traveling the tunnels beneath the city.

Combat Encounter: The first time PCs go off track and fail the skill challenge to find the Chapel, they run into trouble.

Daggerhall Deviants: The PCs encounter the Daggerhall Explorers . . . who are not nearly so nice as their PR suggests. Below the city where no laws exist, they see other adventuring groups as fair game. However, before any combat begins, they present the guise of fellow humanoid explorers below the city. Maze initially appears as a female human, the vampire lord as a human rogue, and the hobgoblin hand of Bane as an armor-encased (including helm) cleric of Avandra. See the suggested social encounter described under Maze the Enchantress's entry below.

Regardless of how well the PCs are getting along with Maze and her crew, either the PCs notice a few too many beetles or fangs, or Maze finally attacks them (unless you determine you'd rather keep up this charade for a while, allowing the PCs to meet Maze later in other circumstances).

Level 12 Encounter (XP 3,300)

- 1 Maze, lamia (level 12 elite controller)
- 1 vampire lord, human rogue (level 11 elite skirmisher)
- 1 hobgoblin hand of Bane (level 8 elite soldier)

In addition to the abilities each creature noted above can access, Maze possesses a ring of *freedom of movement* and can call upon the daily power the ring provides. She uses this ring or her ability to slip through cracks only large enough for Small creatures to squeeze through (a nearby crevice in the tunnels) if things look dire for her band.

Fane of Ophan Encounters

Once PCs reach the Chapel of the Golden Path, also known as the Fane of Ophan, they find an external step-pyramid style structure. Only the top five or six "steps" are visible above the earth in a large vault; the lower levels are yet buried. Inside this buried structure, pretty much anything goes for terrain types you might choose for maps.

If characters have come to the Chapel of the Golden Path because they want to be inducted into the organization, they must pass beyond the strangely hooded guardian priests on the upper edge of the stepped pyramid (this might require a Bluff check for PCs who are not being truthful, or a Diplomacy check for those who are).

If PCs come upon the Fane cold, unless they immediately attack the temple guards, they are also passed inward for a meeting with the high priest.

If PCs failed to meet the Daggerhall Explorers on their way into the Fane, they might very well meet them on their way out, where the Explorers linger just beyond the temple, eager to fall upon PCs they judge too weak to any longer defend themselves.

Important Characters

The PCs can interact with both High Priest Nopaltzin and Maze the Enchantress, while they adventure in or near the Fane of Ophan.

High Priest Nopaltzin

Nopaltzin (level 13 elite controller; Bluff +13) is a mummy lord, which means that even for a snaketongue cultist, his beliefs are unchanging. Each time new seekers of the Golden Path make their way down to the Chapel, Nopaltzin greets them, wearing full robes and regalia to hide his true nature.

Social Encounter: The high priest doesn't immediately seize would-be practitioners of the Golden Path and prepare them for sacrifice (or even those who've stumbled upon the temple for another reason). No, instead the high priest interviews pilgrims and learns what positions they hold in the city above, their abilities, and their relative importance in the wider world. If Nopaltzin determines a particular individual might further his efforts to unearth more portions of the buried fane, he continues to play the part of a pious Golden Path proselytizer (even if that means introducing the concept for the first time for PCs who found the temple without the benefit of the fake preachers in the city above).

In such an instance, he attempts to send the petitioner back on his or her way after a sham-ceremony that welcomes the newcomer to the inner sanctum and promises greater knowledge to come.

The PCs can either play along with this charade or become difficult.

Combat Encounter: If Nopaltzin decides the PCs do not bring additional value to his enterprise (or if PCs become difficult), he orders his nearby snaketongue acolytes to prepare the PCs for their sacrifice to the Coiled One!

Sacrificial Victims: Once combat begins, Nopaltzin begins to chant in a dead voice, describing how each blow he and his celebrants strike against the PCs are dedicated to Zehir, and how each death, too, will be dedicated to the god of Poison, and possibly, each soul so liberated!

Level 18 Encounter (XP 10,300)

- ✦ 1 Nopaltzin, mummy lord (level 13 elite controller)
- ✦ 1 yuan-ti malison sharp eye (level 13 artillery)
- ✦ 1 snaketongue cultist assassin (level 9 lurker)
- ✦ 1 snaketongue cultist celebrant (level 11 controller)
- ✦ 2 snaketongue cultist warriors (level 8 brute)

Nopaltzin uses *plague of doom* first, then stays close to a snaketongue cultist while making *shielding mace* attacks, focusing on PCs who are targeting him with fire or radiant attacks. Once bloodied, Nopaltzin spends his action point to use second wind. If bloodied again, he uses the new power *poison burst*, noted below (not described in the *Monster Manual* but unique to Nopaltzin), then attempts to escape deeper into the dig.

The cultists attack the PCs with joyful abandon, and they also attempt to aid Nopaltzin whenever possible. They willingly sacrifice themselves to ensure Nopaltzin's safety as much as possible.

Poison Burst — **Nopaltzin's Extra Power**

Nopaltzin screams out, "Zehir, take these heathens!" Poisonous green light answer's Nopaltzin's entreaty, encompassing foes in venomous fury.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Poison
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 20 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d6 + Constitution modifier poison damage, and the target is blinded until the end of Nopaltzin's next turn.

Maze the Enchantress

Maze leads a veteran band of adventurers who've walked many leagues below the city. In their time they've fought goblins, drow, and worse. Maze has a mercenary's heart and she doesn't waste a power, a kind word, or even a breath on those who can do her no good.

Social Encounter: When PCs first meet Maze, they are likely to see her in the lawless environment beneath the city. Maze immediately attempts to determine if the band of adventurers make a good target for larceny. At first, Maze and her compatriots are all smiles and laughs, apparently happy to run across fellow ruin raiders below the streets of the city.

During the course of the conversation, Maze asks a few questions about what PCs are up to, if they've discovered anything interesting of late, and if possible, what their strengths are. At the same time, Maze is careful to avoid describing any specifics regarding the Daggerhall Explorers' abilities or recent forays, though she speaks in generalities.

PCs who convey to Maze that they are particularly tough (possibly through Intimidate or Bluff if they are not of average higher level) are left alone and sent on their way with a hearty goodbye. Those who are less convincing are attacked, revealing the Explorers as nothing more than tunnel bandits with expensive cloaks.

Combat Encounter: Use the combat encounter already described under Beneath the City Encounters. When combat begins, Maze and her compatriots reveal their true guises.

Customization

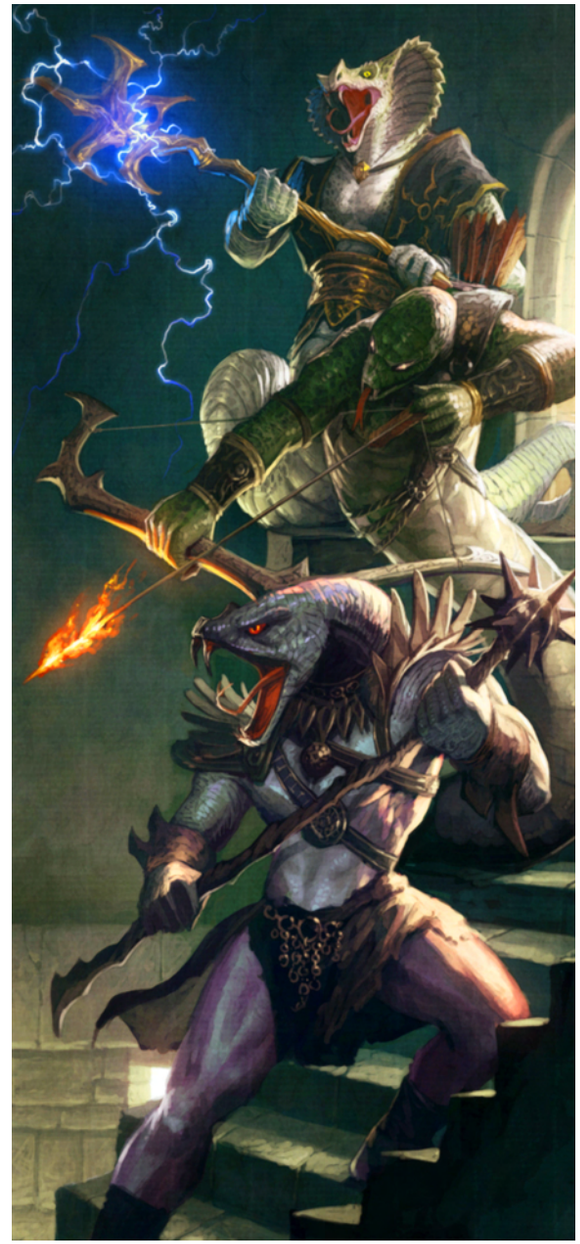
The fane's surface and its buried level can serve as hooks for DMs. The snaketongue cult, fane, and treasures mentioned here (poison-penned tomes and the Fang of Ophan) can be fleshed out and easily dropped into a dungeon of your own design. Of course, you can also change any part of this text to your liking. The whole scenario is assumed to be for 9th- or 10th-level characters.

Depending on how central the city is to your own campaign, you could slowly introduce the Golden Path, beginning with the appearance of a few broadsheets, followed by the adoption of the philosophy by one or two of the city's nobility, and proceeding to the PCs' personal introduction.

What if Baron Karond is toying with the idea of becoming a member? What if someone of even higher level in the city is a member, all unknowing of the Golden Path's true nature? Even if PCs knew the truth, they might make themselves public enemy number one by attacking the fane—a delicate situation to be sure.

About the Authors

Bruce Cordell is a D&D designer, but during his twelve years in the game industry, he has dabbled in miniatures, board games, collectible card games, d20 games, and more. Bruce has over sixty listed credits to his name, including the *Expanded Psionics Handbook*, *Libris Mortis*, and *Expedition to Castle Ravenloft*. His body of work also includes three published *Forgotten Realms* novels (*Lady of Poison*, *Darkvision*, and *Stardeep*), with more on the way.



Dolurrh's Dawn

BY KEITH BAKER

illustration by Ralph Horsley

A FIGURE OF DARK LEGEND, Mordain the Fleshweaver was driven from the Twelve after his attempts to create new life went horribly awry, and since then he has lingered in the shadows of Droaam. "The Forest of Flesh" describes some of the terrors that exist in Mordain's domain. But the woods hold wonders as well as horrors. The strangest of these is the village of Dolurrh's Dawn, a bizarre point of light deep within the Kingdom of Monsters.

Dolurrh's Dawn is a village of 104 people. The origin of the village is a mystery even to those who live there. On Dravago 11th, 996 YK, these people awoke in their beds in the village. Each one of them remembered his or her name and the name of the village . . . and nothing else. Despite this amnesia, each villager found that he or she could draw upon talents lying beyond conscious memory—skills he or she couldn't remember learning. This last year has been a struggle for survival in a very dangerous land. Working together, the people of Dolurrh's Dawn have crafted weapons, learned to hunt the vicious beasts of the forest, and slowly created a life in this savage land.

A village of amnesiacs appearing from nowhere is strange enough, but the inhabitants of Dolurrh's Dawn haven't even realized the true extent of the mystery surrounding their little community. The people of the village know their own names, but they remember nothing about the past . . . and as such, when they first awoke, they didn't recognize any of the other inhabitants of the village. But the first travelers who discover this village are in for a shock. A dwarf named Kordran serves as the town blacksmith. His face might seem familiar to anyone who has been to the Mror Holds, and it shouldn't take long to realize why: They've seen it carved into the side of the Ironroot Mountains, in a monument over a mile in height. He is Lord Kordran Mror, the greatest king to ever rule the realm beneath the mountains. The mud-spattered huntress is Lhazaar, the explorer who led humanity to the shores of Khorvaire. Galifar I sits at a table with Karrn the Conqueror and Jarot, the last ruler of the kingdom Galifar founded. This is a village filled with heroes and legends—yet none of them remember their heroic deeds, nor do they possess the full skills spoken of in the stories. So what are they? Has Mordain found a way to pull these ancient spirits back from the afterlife, in violation of the laws of Dolurrh? Or are these people simulacrums created by the Fleshweaver—clones with vestiges of the heroes' memories, but no true trace of their souls? Either way, what does Mordain have to gain from this experiment, and why has he chosen the subjects that he has?

The People of Dolurrh's Dawn

At a glance, the inhabitants of Dolurrh's Dawn can fit into any village in the Five Nations. While mostly human, the village has a scattering of other races, including a handful of dwarves, elves, gnomes, and

even orcs, spread among the community. Most are dressed in homespun clothing, and the calluses and dirt on their skin tell the tale of their struggle to survive. They are all roughly the same age, once racial deviation is taken into account; the humans are in their mid- to late-twenties, with the other races at an age that would bring them to a similar level of maturity. But there are no village elders and no children—and so far, only one pregnancy (that of Aundair Wynarn). The people know absolutely nothing about the outside world. Those few who have set out in search of a greater civilization have never returned; presumably they fell prey to the many dangers of the Forest of Flesh or the equally hostile environs of Droaam. As a result, a number of theories are circulating around the village. Some believe that this is a form of afterlife. Those who have memories of arcane lore believe they have been transported to another plane of existence—either the madness of Xoriat or a sort of Quori dreamscape. In any case, all the villagers are surprised and thrilled to encounter travelers from the outside world. Some might treat strangers with suspicion, fearing that this is a trick of the forest, but the majority begs for tales of the world beyond the woods and anything that can fill the gaps in their memories.

Most of what the villagers know comes to them as instinct. Aside from their names, most of them have only vague memories of their former lives, glimpses seen in half-remembered dreams. Malleon is a brutal soldier, but he doesn't remember how he learned to use the greataxe; likewise, he remembers nothing about Lhazaar, but he feels a basic loyalty toward her. The dwarves in the village have rallied around Kordran Mror. The Wynarns know from their family name and broad physical resemblance that they must be related, but they don't know exactly how; lacking any evidence to the contrary, they've assumed that they are all siblings or cousins. If the PCs reveal the true relations between these people—including the fact that Karrn is a distant ancestor of Galifar—it could improve relations, or it could make them much worse.

Here are a few of the more remarkable inhabitants of the village.

Galifar Wynarn (male human warlord). This is Galifar I, the man who united the Five Nations and created a kingdom that lasted for a thousand years. Even in this village of generals and kings, his charisma and ingenuity are truly remarkable. Galifar brought order after the villagers first awoke, and he coordinated the construction of the stockade wall. He has become the de facto leader of Dolurrh's Dawn, but many envy his influence, especially Karrn, Dorius, and Malleon.

Ashalyn Vol (female elf cleric). An Aereni necromancer born five thousand years ago, Ashalyn laid many of the cornerstones of the faith that has evolved into the modern Blood of Vol. While a cleric, she was once also a wizard who possessed knowledge of a vast array of rituals, especially those involving necromantic magic. Either she doesn't remember her past . . . or she's choosing to hide it from her companions.

Aundair Wynarn (good female human wizard). A daughter of Galifar Wynarn, Aundair was one of the greatest wizards in Galifar's army. Kind and gentle by nature, she is working with Ashalyn and Dorius to try to reconstruct their memories of magical rituals. She and Cael Vadallia fell in love, and Aundair is six months pregnant with Cael's child . . . which could be the first half-elf in Dolurrh's Dawn.

Cael Vadallia (good male elf ranger). A legendary Tairnadal archer from the Age of Giants, and a distant ancestor of the current high king of Valenar, Cael Vadallia is also a skilled hunter. He has used his talents as a bowyer and fletcher to craft weapons for the village. A noble soul, he instinctively despises cruelty and tyranny and dislikes Karrn and Malleon.

Dorius Alyre Korran (evil male gnome wizard). The founder of the Library of Korranberg and a brilliant scholar, Dorius plays the part of a kindly arcane sage. However, behind this mask he is a greedy schemer who seeks personal power. He won't challenge Galifar openly, but he is quietly using Karrn and Malleon to undermine Galifar's influence.

Kaius Wynarn I (male human warlord). Kaius is the son of Jarot Wynarn, and he is the leader who rebelled against Mishann of Cyre and instituted the harsh Code of Kaius in Karrnath. Some PCs might know that Kaius I exists as a vampire in Khorvaire; this reborn Kaius is drawn from the point the current Kaius "died," and he is neither as dark nor as ruthless as his later self. He is a proud man who cares deeply about the safety of the people of the village, and he has become the "innkeeper" of the Sunrise tavern, where he tends to the daily needs of the villagers. Currently he is a strong supporter of Galifar, but he is growing closer to Ashalyn Vol. If Ashalyn recreates the rituals of the Blood of Vol, perhaps Kaius will become a vampire once more!

Karrn (evil male human warlord). The founder of Karrnath, Karrn the Conqueror is a brilliant tactical warlord. His flaws are his cruelty and his ego, and these have kept the other villagers from turning to him for leadership. He is deeply jealous of Galifar, but as a tactician he realizes that the village can't afford to lose such a skilled man. Nonetheless, he often challenges Galifar's decisions, and this tension will only grow over time.

Kordran Mror (lawful good male dwarf). Kordran is the greatest king of the dwarven nation that once lay below the Ironroot Mountains—a nation destroyed long ago by the daelkyr. Kordran is a calm, wise person and has chosen to support Galifar. He is a skilled smith and has created both weapons and tools

for the community; now they are in desperate need of ore.

Jarot Wynarn (male human fighter)**.** The last king of the united Galifar, Jarot is the weakest of the Wynarns in all senses of the word. His greatest flaw is his paranoia, and he will be the first to accuse PCs of treachery or deception. He is a skilled siege engineer and helps to maintain the village walls.

Jhazalaen Elorrenthi (female elf ranger). An ancestor of the elves who would eventually form House Phiarlan, Jhazalaen is a battle dancer who supposedly blinded a king of the giants with her graceful motions and flashing blades. In addition to hunting the beasts of the forest, Jhazalaen entertains the villagers with her dazzling performances.

Lhazaar (evil female human rogue). Lhazaar is the explorer and pirate queen who led the first great wave of humanity to Khorvaire. The circumstances of her death remain a mystery, since her flagship disappeared in a great storm. Lhazaar is inquisitive and charismatic, with some of the talents of a warlord supporting her deadly skill with her blades. She is intrigued by Galifar and so far she has chosen not to oppose him; however, this could easily change. She is one of the most active explorers in the villager and knows much about the Forest of Flesh.

Malleon Kas (evil male human fighter). During Lhazaar's colonization of Khorvaire, Malleon earned the sobriquet "the Reaver" due to his brutal slaughter of the native goblinoids. He is a giant of a man, possessing immense strength and a fearsome glare. Though he lacks the memories of his past, he is devoted to Lhazaar; however, she is more interested in Galifar. Malleon would love to see Galifar slain and Lhazaar in his place. Malleon is a vicious bigot and despises all nonhumans.

Rasha'Torrn (good female orc). The Gatekeeper druids brought an end to the incursion of Xoriat into Eberron, and Rasha'Torrn brought the druids together for that final ritual. She has yet to regain access to her mystical powers, and many of the villagers distrust her because of her race. Nonetheless, she is wise and a skilled healer, with great knowledge of the natural world.

Sasselassum (male halfling rogue). Born in the Talenta Plains thousands of years ago, Sasselassum is a trickster whose deeds are the stuff of hundreds of Talentan folktales. Though clever and experienced in the ways of the natural world, Sasselassum is impulsive; his curiosity and impetuous nature often get him into trouble.

Aside from their names, most villagers have only vague memories of their former lives, glimpses seen in half-remembered dreams.

Talas Thorn (male human). Talas is a priest of the Sovereign Host, born in Sharn in the year 687 YK. He is friendly enough and a talented healer, but otherwise unremarkable—a man who left no mark on history. However, many remarkable events occurred during his lifetime . . . could it be that his role in them was never discovered? Was he one of the worst serial killers in Sharn's history? Was he a secret servant of the Traveler, or an agent of the Lords of Dust? Or is he just the kind priest he appears to be?

These are just a few possibilities. Many other historical figures could be interesting. Aeren, the prophet who led the elves away from Xen'drik. Aaren d'Cannith, creator of the warforged. Tira Miron, the founder of the modern Church of the Silver Flame. Halas Tarkanan, greatest leader of the aberrant forces in the War of the Mark. Erandis d'Vol, last scion of the Mark of Death. A lycanthrope from the time of the Silver Purge. Beyond this, many other people whose role in history is unknown, like Talas Thorn, could be here. Another option is to have a few people whose only real significance appears to be their connection to the player characters. The wife of the PC fighter, who was slain during the Last War. The party's favorite innkeeper, who was killed during a bar brawl with the enemies of the PCs. Why would Mordain choose to resurrect a simple innkeeper? Is this entire experiment being conducted for the benefit of the PCs? Or is there an important secret about the innkeeper (he's an Inspired plant; an agent of the Chamber; last member of an exotic bloodline) the PCs never discovered?

The Shape of the Village

Dolurrh's Dawn is a village under siege. The surrounding forest is filled with monsters and threats that stagger the imagination. Raging foulspawn, hungry gricks, and lurking skinweavers are just a few of the horrors the villagers have to deal with on a regular basis. When the PCs approach Dolurrh's Dawn, the first thing that they see is the high stockade wall surrounding it. Sharpened tree-trunks are lashed together, and deep gashes in the wood suggest the work of claws and acid. A half-dozen archers patrol the walls at all hours, ready to raise the alarm at the slightest sign of trouble. There are no gates in the wall. Ropes are used by those agile enough to climb, while a makeshift stretcher-and-pulley system allows larger objects to be brought up and over the stockade.

Inside, Dolurrh's Dawn is a study in contrasts. A number of ramshackle buildings constructed using the same limited resources as the wall are within the

village. But the heart of the village has a few structures of quarried stone, with windows of *hardened* glass and all the amenities one would expect to find in Fairhaven or Wroat. These are the buildings the villagers found themselves in when they first awoke. These include a well of magically purified water and a public latrine in the town square; a simple forge contained in the building where Kordran Mror works; and a few simple, solid cottages. The final structure is a large tavern, bearing a trade sign marked with the symbol of a sun rising over a black field. The locals call this Sunrise, and it is both the town hall and canteen for Dolurrh's Dawn. The Wynarns have laid claim to the living quarters in Sunrise, and Kaius has taken over the maintenance of the building. In general, however, the villagers are living a hard frontier life; whatever they need—including ore for the forge—must be found in the wilds. Many of the villagers would consider something as simple as paper and ink to be a treasure; the mages of the village have been using a variety of makeshift materials to produce a book of rituals.

The people of Dolurrh's Dawn have little to offer outsiders. However, the hunters and gatherers have become adept at finding food in the deadly forest. The crafters of the village are nonetheless masters of their respective trades, and this might be an opportunity for PCs: Kordran Mror might have limited resources, but he's still known as one of the greatest smiths in the history of Khorvaire, and an axe forged by his hands could have considerable power.

Using Dolurrh's Dawn

Dolurrh's Dawn can serve many different roles. To begin with, it is an unexpected sanctuary in a dangerous place. It's not easy to find a safe haven in the Forest of Flesh, and adventurers who have used their last healing surges in a battle with skinweavers might be thrilled when they see the high walls and friendly lights of this village. The DM needs to decide the degree to which the inhabitants of the village have recovered their old skills (something which can vary by individual). If the villagers are 1st-level characters, then they might need the party's help to survive the deadly threats posed by the forest. On the other hand, if the people of the village have regained their legendary skills, they might be powerful allies in a struggle against an epic threat—or a source of unexpected treasure. While the weapon might not be pretty, an axe forged by Kordran Mror or bow carved by Cael Vadallia could possess tremendous magical might.

Any way you look at it, Dolurrh's Dawn is a remarkable place—and a disturbing sign of the power of Mordain the Fleshweaver.

Another question is whether the villagers want to leave Dolurrh's Dawn. Getting a hundred people across Droaam would be a challenge in its own right, but the greater issue is the impact these people would have on the world. If it can be proven that Galifar truly is who he says he is and not a doppelganger or demon, how would his return affect the Five Nations? What would happen between the living Kaius and the vampire? Might Karrn the Conqueror seize Karrnath away from Kaius and start the war anew? Upon learning about the fragile state of the world, Galifar might insist that all the villagers remain in Dolurrh's Dawn, refusing to let their return bring chaos to a fragile world.

In addition to serving as a backdrop for adventure, Dolurrh's Dawn could also serve as an origin for a character. There's no reason the villagers have to be NPCs. If he wanted, a player could choose to play the reborn Galifar, Karrn the Conqueror, or any other figure from history. Reborn in Dolurrh's Dawn, he has made his way to the Five Nations—what happens next? Does this reborn champion have an epic destiny to fulfill, or is he Mordain's idea of a cosmic joke?

If its people resemble the heroes of the past but have few of their powers or skills, Dolurrh's Dawn can be used as a strange village in a surprising location. If the villagers possess some of their old talents, it can be a source of powerful allies or deadly enemies. Either way, Dolurrh's Dawn is a remarkable place—and a disturbing sign of the power of Mordain the Fleshweaver.

New Epic Destiny: Reborn Champion

Dolurrh could not hold your spirit, and you have returned to this world in its hour of need.

Prerequisite: 21st level

Some say that the souls of the greatest heroes are tied to the Prophecy, and that they cannot truly rest until their destiny is fulfilled. You are the vessel for such a spirit—a champion of the past reborn in an age that needs you. It's possible that you are truly the hero returned and that your body was somehow reconstituted or preserved. Dolurrh's Dawn is one example of how this could happen, but you could just as easily be a hero spirited away to Thelanis or bound in mystic

slumber by Sora Teraza, whose true memory has only just returned. Alternatively, you could be a modern vessel for an ancient spirit. The Valenar elves have long claimed that a great hero could become an avatar for an even greater champion of the past; whether you are an elf channeling one of the warriors of Xen'drik or a paladin drawing on the soul of Tira Miron, you are living proof of this theory.

As a reborn champion, your greatest strength is the skill that you possess. You might not have the raw might of a Demigod or the impossible luck of a Deadly Trickster, but your skills and heroism are the stuff of legend. You're not just a cutpurse, you're the greatest pickpocket history has ever known, and Thievery comes as easily to you as breathing. You might not possess the sheer spellpower of the Archmage, but you might know more about Arcana than anyone alive.

Every reborn champion has a different destiny—a quest tied to your past. This is something you need to determine with the DM, but be sure to clearly tie it to known legends. For example, if you are the reborn champion of Tira Miron (founder of the modern church of the Silver Flame), you might need to defeat a great uprising of the demon Overlords. If you are the reborn champion of Galifar I, it might be your task to reunite the Five Nations under the banner of Galifar; if you are the reborn champion of Karrn the Conqueror, you might also want to unite the nations, but under the banner of Karrnath. A Valenar champion might seek vengeance against the dragons who destroyed all the nations of Xen'drik. A kalashtar reborn champion might be the key to transforming Dal Quor from a realm of nightmares to a place of light. Sometimes, you might not even know why you've returned. You're the greatest pickpocket in the history of Galifar, and your skills are the stuff of legends, but you never planned on saving the world. But the Prophecy has a plan for you—and it will take your nimble fingers to pluck the *Ring of Deepest Shadows* from the fingers of Erandis d'Vol when she seeks to claim the *Throne of Endless Night*. All that is certain is that this is a task that only you can accomplish—one so important that your spirit could not be allowed to pass on until it was done.

Depending on whether you are truly the hero reborn or a spirit possessing a new body, the other people of the age might recognize your true nature. Being known as a reborn champion can be a blessing and a curse. Some people are quick to offer their allegiance, either out of respect for your ancient deeds or because they hope to be part of your new legend. But others might not be so helpful. Queen Aurala won't be happy to hear about the return of Kaius the Conqueror, and Cardinal Krozen might see a reborn Tira Miron as a threat to his own ambitions. Some might call you a fraud. Beyond this, the many stories about you ensure that your enemies know about your skills and talents; a successful DC 20 History check can provide a character with a clear rundown of your abilities.

Once and Future Immortality

Your return is proof that death cannot hold you. It's possible that you've returned many times in the past; you might be looking forward to true death when you've completed your destiny. Or perhaps the Prophecy has further need of you. If this is the case, odds are good that you vanish into the shadows of time and the planes. No one knows exactly where you've gone—but you'll return again when you are least expected and needed the most.

Reborn Champion Features

All reborn champions have the following features.

Deeds of Song and Story (21st level): Your talents have inspired legends. Three times per day, as a free action, you can forgo rolling for success on a skill check, and instead treat the check as if you rolled a 20. You must use this ability before attempting the check.

Legends Never Die (24th level): When you make a death saving throw, use the following results for the saving throw instead of the ones presented on page 195 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Lower than 8: You slip one step closer to death. If you get this result four times before you take a rest, you die.

8-17: No change.

18 or higher: Spend a healing surge. When you do so, you are considered to have 0 hit points, and then your healing surge restores hit points as normal. You are no longer dying, and you are conscious but still prone. If you roll 18 or higher but have no healing surges left, your condition doesn't change.

Legendary Action (30th level): When you score a critical hit on your turn, you take an extra standard action as a free action.

Stance of Legend **Reborn Champion Utility 26**

The forces of destiny provide you with an uncanny awareness of your surroundings, which affects how you hold yourself and how you react to your environment and the actions of others.

Daily ✦ Stance
Minor Action Personal
Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws. You can end this stance at any time during your turn as a free action. When you end the stance, you may either end all conditions affecting you or spend a healing surge and regain your healing surge value in hit points.

About the Author

Keith Baker has been an avid fan of Dungeons & Dragons since grade school. His life took a dramatic turn in 2002 when he submitted the world of Eberron to the Wizards of the Coast Fantasy Setting Search. In addition to developing the *Eberron Campaign Setting* and *Shadows of the Last War*, he has worked for Atlas Games, Goodman Games, and Green Ronin.

Monsters! Monsters!

The Approach to D&D's Monster Design

This month's Design & Development column is brought to you by Senior Designer Rob Heinsoo and Associate Developer Peter Schaefer.

Starting Points

Rob Heinsoo: Before we even began 4th Edition, Andy, James, and I (and probably a big chunk of the rest of the department) knew that we wanted to handle monster design differently than we'd handled it in 3rd Edition.

In fact, one of 4th Edition's advances is to rethink half of 3rd Edition's biggest advances. Third Edition rationalized 2nd Edition's somewhat ad hoc approach to monster design by applying the same internally consistent rules and rubrics to monsters as were assigned to player characters.

To be clear, a bunch of roleplaying games out prior to 3rd Edition had beaten D&D to that punch. To some extent, 2nd Edition's mechanics had fallen behind the state of the art; 3rd Edition brought D&D back up to speed.

As a response to eight years of 3rd Edition gaming and DMing, we 4th Edition designers decided that 3rd Edition had gone slightly too far in designing monsters using the same rules as PCs. The 3rd Edition approach created a thicket of mathematical formulae that were technically supposed to be consulted whenever a DM wanted to do something interesting with a monster. (Or, for that matter, when we at Wizards of the Coast—as well as third-party publishers—wanted to create new monsters.) By using rules for monsters that were as detailed as the rules for PCs, we were implying that monsters deserved the same level of mechanical fiddling as PCs.

Fourth Edition's design started from the foundation that the PCs deserve more attention than monsters. Monsters generally appear on-stage for half or three-quarters of an encounter, whereas PCs have contracts for multiple levels. So we reversed direction compared to 3rd Edition and decided that everyone in D&D who is not a PC can be handled using simpler mechanics.

To a developer, this is a dream come true. And not one of those wacky dreams where you dress up as a snail, but the one where you're about to bite into your favorite dinner ever.

Peter Schaefer: To a developer, this is a dream come true. And not one of those wacky dreams where you dress up as a snail, but the one where you're about to bite into your favorite dinner ever. Developing 3rd Edition monsters was too much work for disproportionate reward: check and double-check the monster's HD against its base attack bonus, feats, and skill points, and check its type and subtype to make sure everything made sense, all to confirm the construction of a stat block most players would never see. Many of the people who would see it wouldn't notice an error if one were there. That's not something we wanted to spend hours on.

And it did take hours. Developing a monster got bogged down by the minutiae of a monster's numbers, making it difficult to focus on what made the monster useful in a game. The higher-level question of "Does this monster do what we want?" all too often took a backseat. Not anymore.

Rob says 3rd Edition played catch up with its monster design in some ways. In a similar fashion, so is 4th Edition. There were and are many games that accept that PCs and their enemies are not the same things and do not need the same levels of detail or methods of construction. As it happens, we agree.

Streamlining While Expanding Flavor

RH: I naturally had a somewhat different approach to D&D monsters thanks to my work on the *D&D Miniatures* game and my earlier involvement in numerous trading card game designs. *D&D Minis* design involved weighing a highly detailed 3rd Edition RPG monster or character, with somewhere between five and 25 noteworthy abilities or spells, and then cutting away the dross and elaborating upon the idea that seemed coolest or most useful in a miniatures battle.

PS: This sort of minimalist design—besides being necessary for the miniature game—can be a good exercise in other aspects of games. What is the shortest way to get this power across? If I can only have three abilities for this monster, which one makes it the most memorable? Which feel like a signature?

It's no accident that we ended up taking a similar approach to monster design in 4th Edition. We knew that we didn't want our creatures to have laundry lists of abilities and powers that were included only for game background purposes, or because all other creatures of that type had all those abilities. We wanted to make the DM's job easier by focusing on the small number of abilities that really mattered for a monster.

Let's be honest: The satisfaction these people more often derived was in noticing that we'd miscalculated a formula somewhere.

We wanted to make the play experience richer by maintaining focus on monster abilities that truly make a difference in play, instead of taking the completionist route we'd adopted while designing 3rd Edition.

PS: Readability is second only to usability. If a stat block is taking up an entire column of text, it had better be for a good reason. And it usually isn't.

Fourth Edition's playable distinctions between basic monster races like goblins, kobolds, gnolls, and orcs are a good example of the new approach. In 3rd Edition, each of these races was represented as a monster that started with 1 HD. Weapons, armor, and size differentiated these creatures, but not much else. Fourth edition gives each race a cool ability that is unique to that race, something that creates different problems for the PCs. Kobolds shift as a minor action, meaning that you can't actually pin them down unless you've got a fighter in your party. Goblins shift if you miss them with a melee attack, meaning they're adept at getting away when you don't expect it. Gnolls gang up and kill in packs, and orcs have the resilience to regain some hit points while making an attack if they are bloodied, so if you bloody an orc, you want to finish the job quickly.

PS: And fantastically, these powers aren't inherent to the race. Each bugbear has *predatory eye* because it's in the monster's stat block, not because the monster is a bugbear. We set up patterns that players are supposed to recognize as the schticks of a breed of monster—so in this case, players learn that giving *any* bugbear combat advantage hurts. But there's no rule that says we must include the power. For any reason, including narrative reasons (such as a creature trying to rise above its base instincts) and game reasons (such as the stat block being too full and predatory eye being the least interesting of all the powers), we can trim the power. Neither we nor DMs need to look up "bugbear" to find what traits all bugbears have that aren't listed; you won't see a stat block that includes "bugbear traits" that forces you to look elsewhere. This saves time, circumvents mistakes, and gives *us* the confidence that when we look at a monster stat block, we're seeing all there is to see. We don't need to worry that the monster is really too complicated when you take its inherent qualities into account, or that it's nonsensical once you combine the written-out powers with its hidden powers.

We couldn't get completely away from inherent traits. It's only in the MM glossary that we learn that angels do not breathe or that undead do not sleep, and that swarms have special movement rules. But boy, did we try!

Monsters Now Appear in Context

RH: Third edition's biggest design concern was to make each monster consistent with its type. Aberrations were supposed to have aberration HD. Devils carried a variety of formatting instructions derived from their status as Lawful Evil outsiders, as well as a raft of standard devil abilities. Unfortunately none of these standardizations actually helped DMs design better encounters.

We went to a lot of design and editing trouble to make monsters fit specific formats, but when that monster hit the table, our extra work hadn't really accomplished anything; only readers who appreciated strict adherence to known monster-creation formulas got any satisfaction out of a perfectly done stat block. And let's be honest: The satisfaction these people more often derived was in noticing that we'd miscalculated a formula somewhere.

Fourth Edition cares much less about matching specific monsters to a type-based formula. When we're designing a monster now, we care first and foremost how it affects play and how it accomplishes an interesting role in an encounter.

What we noticed is that encounters with multiple monsters attacking from different angles were usually more fun than encounters in which the PCs ganged up on a single foe. Third Edition's encounter math was built around a single foe, and it took a lot of care to build fun encounters that were based on fighting multiple foes.

PS: It's much easier to lock down a single monster on the battle grid. Once you do that, a combat starts to feel more like a slog than it would if PCs and monsters were moving around. That's one reason we try to give solo monsters some mobility, helping them avoid getting trapped.

By designing 4th Edition monsters around roles that give each monster something specific to do in combat, we're providing elements that DMs can fit together into encounters and adventures as they choose, while having a fairly good idea of what each monster is capable of and how it can combine in interesting ways with other monsters.

Monster Stories

RH: The move toward encounters that use monster groups made up of monsters with different roles has an important implication for the game world's story. When you're making up new monsters, or setting up your campaign world's back story, you want to look for ways in which individual monsters link up with other monsters. Creating monsters that have nothing to do with any other monster is fine as an exception, but it won't lead to encounters that work best. As a rule, you want to look for ways that monsters can cooperate, at least briefly, with other monsters, rather than creating stories in which particular monster races practice genocide against everything that's not in their narrow genotype.

Having said that, I expect to break this rule later in my campaign. I'm going to introduce a new type of non-solo monster that is too nasty to team up with any other creature. I'll phrase this new creature as supernaturally corrupt and deadly to *all* other creatures in its area, so all the other creatures in the world feel as much loathing for the creature as the PCs.

Recharge Mechanics

RH: Here's an element of 3rd Edition that I loved: A dragon's breath weapon that could be used every few rounds. But I didn't like rolling and then tracking rounds. As a DM or a player, I didn't want to have to count out rounds. Jonathan Tweet pointed out rolling 1d4 for the number of rounds it took for a breath weapon to recharge meant that there was a 40% chance the breath weapon would recharge each round. I loved that approach, and started running 3rd Edition games in which I, like the PCs, had no idea whether a dragon would be able to breathe on its turn until I'd rolled for its breath weapon. (As fortune had it, the only PC I killed using that dragon breath method was Jonathan's kobold warmage, Akatrask.)

PS: Technically, there's a 25% chance it recharges the first round, a 33% chance the second round, a 50% chance the next round, and a 100% chance the last round. It averages out to a 40% chance each round, which isn't the same thing. I'm picking nits, but getting the math right is my job.

RH: I preserved this random-recharge approach while working on 4th Edition and on the associated revision of the minis game. Monsters have powers that may or may not be useable on their next turn. PCs won't know precisely when a monster is going to be able to use its big power again, so combats feel that much riskier. The pressure the PCs often feel is that they want to take the monster out before it can use its big power again, and that's exactly how adventurers would feel in a real fight.

PS: I like it because it fits our mechanical guideline of avoiding durations that force you to count down over multiple rounds. Once rolling recharge becomes part of your routine, it takes less DM processor power than incrementing up a counter each round.

RH: The variety of recharge mechanics also lets us model an ever expanding number of situations. There are going to be some methods of recharging powers that are standard and expected. Others will appear as one-of-a-kind exceptions on monsters that are different than all other monsters.

PS: And this is my favorite aspect of recharge. Rolling is well and good—it gives you a rough idea of how frequently the monster can unleash its special attack. But a descriptive conditional recharge defines the monster or its tactics. The imp's tail sting recharges when the creature uses its vanish ability, making it clear that the monster hides, stings, and repeats. The pseudodragon's invisibility recharges when the creature is damaged, so after using it once the creature must fight in the open before it can hide again.

Another impressive use of conditional recharges is effect-limiting powers. The unicorn's fey beguiling recharges "when no creature is affected by the power," so if no one is beguiled, the unicorn can try to affect someone else—and otherwise not. It's not something that's hard to write into a power text directly, but it's a pleasure to see it fit into an existing mechanic so easily.

About the Authors

Senior Designer Rob Heinsoo failed to signal for a left turn on the Midway and was quickly cited and sent to a Home for the Misdirected. His partner in crime, Associate Developer Peter Schaefer prefers to remain anonymous, determined to slip the moniker PS and all its cloying baggage.

My Secret Life as a Dungeon Master

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE

Most conversations between 60-something year-old mothers and their 30-something year-old daughters don't generally go like this:

"Mom, I need your recipe for pistachio cake. I'm DM'ing a game on Wednesday!"

"Oh Sweetie, you're going to be a Dungeon Master! I'm so proud of you!"

This conversation took place via cell phone while my mom was shopping at Target. She is proud of me being a Dungeon Master, likening it to directing a blockbuster summer movie or that time I ran for Vice President in 10th grade (and lost to Stacy Hendrick's boyfriend, of all people!).

Mom did get some weird looks that day, which pissed her off. She's become very protective of D&D and the people who play.

To the woman on her right pretending to study picture frames, my mom said, "I hope she doesn't kill her friends. Imagine the guilt."

My mom would make a fantastic Dungeon Master.

Guilt aside, my opportunity was coming with alarming frequency. But there was so much to do! Like finding willing and able participants.

Learning a thing or two from my ambush D&D game with the girls, I knew it would be best to:

A. Play with people who already know how to play and

B. Be honest about your intentions.

Maybe even more importantly they should possess the following traits:

Charisma (15+): Must have the ability do something entertaining to divert the focus off me while I try to figure out which page of the adventure I'm on. (Scott.)

Intelligence (14+): Must have enough knowledge of the game to not need me to explain the little details. (Marty.)

Wisdom (6): IQ aside, this person must be easily won over with food and drinks. (Adam.)

Strength (13+): Must be strong and focused enough to help get the game back on track should I completely lose control. Or drink too much and pass out. Or lock myself in the bathroom out of shame. (Sara.)

Dexterity (15+): Must be nimble, fast-thinking, and able to focus on many tasks at once, such as playing a PC and answering the DM's questions, such as "Can they look in that window? They can? What do they see?" (New DM.)

While most of them knew of my experiment, they didn't all know they'd be part of it. Not sure if this would be considered an honor, I thought I'd employ some reverse psychology tactics.

Hi everyone,

After months of careful scrutiny, pretend focus groups, and miles of secret footage, you have been selected to take part in a once a lifetime opportunity. I have nominated you to be on TLC's What Not to Wear*! Stacy and Clinton will be here tomorrow so look your worst!*

Ha, ha, ha, just kidding . . .

Within seconds Adam was at my desk.

"You're not funny," he said.

I hate it when people open conversations with that.

"But yeah, I'll play D&D with you."

Let it be known this was the same day Adam showed up to work in sandals and socks. I'm just saying . . .

Marty and Sara were equally upset, but only because they were *not* going to be on the show.

Unfortunately, my plan to bribe with food and beverages was foiled. Of the two dates I suggested, it was nearly impossible to get everyone together. New DM told me to go forth without key members, but I couldn't. Using the visualization exercises James Wyatt suggested, I was already picturing Marty hitting his head on the stalactites, Adam taking a wrong turn and splitting up the party (again), and Scott flinging whole-wheat crackers dotted with Norwegian Jarlsburg cheese in my direction. I had to play with this group!

"Then we have to do it at work," New DM said.

At work! Let me check the Employee Handbook, but I'm pretty sure HR has some "rule" about bribing your co-workers with alcoholic beverages. Not to mention that the day care would probably call Child Protective Services if Sara went to collect her kids with a cabernet mustache and a sudden speech impediment.

Adding to my misery, New DM wanted to take our regularly scheduled game slot and use it for my practice game.

"How will I explain this to Tabitha?" I asked.

"Send her to Santa Fe on vacation," he said. "Oso de la Fez wants to learn how to make turquoise jewelry."

Why would a bear who wears a tutu and a fez need tacky broaches and pendants? But I acquiesce. Wednesday afternoon it is.

New DM suggested I run *Into the Shadowhaunt*. Unfortunately, everyone in my group had already either run or played this 1st-level adventure on Game Day.

"Just turn it into one of your 'What I did over the weekend' stories," New DM said. "They'll be so confused, they'll never recognize it."

That particular weekend I attended a town meeting about unfair efforts to ban certain breeds of dogs, like pit bulls. Our conversation about the poor treatment of pit bulls inevitably led to the issue of dog fighting, which pretty much set the room ablaze. Inspired, I got to work immediately (in the company of a foster dog who happened to be part pit bull).

Our adventure takes place in the town of Charlesburg—a place known for its peaceful neighbors and welcoming vibe. In a country rife with conflict and hardship, it's almost as if Charlesburg exists under the protection of a magic shield. Charlesburg was also voted "Healthiest Place to Live" due to the fact everyone's blood pressure is spot on . . . perhaps due to the enormous canine population in town.

I used to work at a men's clothing store under the dictatorship of a manager who ranked outfitting men in band collars and boucle blazers up there with feeding the homeless and universal healthcare. I left with $67 dollars in a savings account, a store credit card I didn't need, and this nugget of advice: "Know your s*&t." It's true. The more I mouthed off about the proper care of Donegal sweaters or the benefits of wool trousers mixed with silk tweeds, the more they bought. Figuring the same to be true of Dungeon Mastering, in the weeks leading up to my game I found myself in full-on research mode.

Here's a tip. If you're . . . say . . . a dog lover and easily traumatized by . . . say. . . dogs in unpleasant situations, do not—and I repeat DO NOT—do a Google search for something like. . . oh, I don't know. . . dog fighting! Within seconds, I was bombarded with harrowing pictures. What did I expect? justrandomfactsaboutdogfightingringsforyournextd&dcampaign.com?

Emotionally scarred, I made my way to New DM's desk to explain why I was going on sick leave.

Shaking his head, he offered his own nugget of advice: "Use your imagination. Like the rest of the D&D population."

Right.

Nestled upon the east hill of Charlesburg sits Howl Haven—once a shelter for dogs, mostly pit bulls that had been run out of other towns by people who believed them to be four-legged vessels of evil, the shelter was once as famous for its compassion and open-arms attitude as Charlesburg. But the townspeople no longer speak of Howl Haven—not since it was the subject of a brutal attack and overtaken by a being of true evil. Many lives—canine and human—were lost in the battle. The people of Charlesburg had lived in peace for so long they had no idea how to fight back. Until now.

We were all gearing up for Wednesday. Adam kept telling me how excited he was. Marty brushed off my nerves with an offhand, "You'll be fine! You were a theater major!" Scott hovered around my cubicle saying things like, "You better know what you're doing. Are you nervous? This better be fun."

And I invited him why?

I awoke the morning of my DM debut in a fit of anxiety. What was going on here? Was I in a play I hadn't rehearsed for? Did I have a Spanish test I didn't study for? Was I being chased by a pack of rabid goats again? I should be so lucky. Today was the day my prepping, stalking, and elevator interrogating had prepared me for.

"Eye of the Tiger, Shelly," I said to myself as I got out of bed. "Eye of the Tiger."

On the way to work, I skipped my favorite talk show to go over my lines.

This is not the Charlesburg you've heard so much about. The downtown is nearly deserted. No thriving retail economy. No straight-out-of-a-Disney-musical townsfolk. No (gasp!) dogs!

By 11:00 I rewrote my entire campaign.

By 12:30 I copied all my notes onto color-coded Post-Its. Pink for combat. Yellow for perception checks. Green for read-aloud text.

By 1:45 I had already been to New DM's desk six times.

By 3:30 my group had taken their seats around the table. Our table. The table where we've shared many an adventure. The table where things could go horribly awry!

By 3:37 I had run back to my desk three times.

"Sorry," I told the group. "I think I have everything now."

They didn't mind as they were busy chatting about their new characters. Apparently someone got access to the Racial Traits section of the *Monster Manual* and the *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, because I found myself in a conference room full of shifters, kobolds, and drow. Who invited these people?

"I'm PilaafDokkurFljot," Scott says. "Drow ranger."

"Jerika," Sara says. "Razorclaw shifter rogue."

"Balthazar," says Marty. "Dragonborn paladin"

"Kritter," beams Adam. "Kobold wizard."

"No one wants to be an elf?" I asked.

Even New DM folded to the powers of a new supplement: *Player's Handbook II*. He created a warforged of a top-secret leader class that I can't disclose yet. His character travels with a "buddy" who keeps the party in tip-top shape but that's all New DM was willing to disclose. I picture him somewhere between Deepak Chopra and Trainer Bob from the *Biggest Loser*.

"Look at you, traveling with a personal trainer," Scott says. "Who are you playing? Christina Aguilera?"

"I'm Turducken," he says. "This here is Pabst."

And I'm screwed. What was that I said about being over-prepared? I'm not even sure I can get this group within spitting distance of the beaten path.

I'm no James Wyatt. I'm not even sure I *know* James Wyatt, given how out of the zone I feel right now. My group is chatty and unfocused. There are about four different conversations going right now, and none of them involve my read-aloud text. Have they not just spent the past 8 hours together? I focus on the screen in front of me, my props in neatly organized piles, and my color-coded Post-It notes. Even my notes have notes!

Eye of the Tiger, Shelly!

"Continuing on," I say, forcing the group to zip it momentarily and focus on me. Props help. I hand out the flyers the characters notice taped to lampposts in Charlesburg.

Lost Dog!

Missing!

Reward!

Only the tavern shows signs of life . . .

"TO THE TAVERN!" Turducken shouts. "WE NEED SOME CLUES!"

"Inside voice," I say.

"Sorry. Turducken has volume control issues."

"Don't eat the mystery meat special," Pila says. "Woof woof, if you know what I mean."

"Order the hummus," I say. "I hear it's good. And vegetarian."

With that, I place a large bowl on the table.

"Is this the Middle Ages or the Middle East?" Marty asks, taking a handful of pita chips.

"It's fantasy," I say. "They also serve pizza." Gorgonzola, cranberry, caramelized onions, and thyme pizza, no less.

"So far you're a very good DM," Adam says as he takes a slice. His Wisdom drops to 5.

Inside the tavern, you see a handful of people plus a bartender. One of them looks familiar.

I brought along my Astrid mini for moral support and decided last minute to cast her as "Concerned Townsperson 1."

"Astrid!" Sara says.

"Hey blondie," Pila says. "This town's a major buzzkill. What gives?"

"We could use some help," Astrid says.

Our beloved dogs are falling victim to a rash of dognappings. They vanish from their homes in the middle of the night. No signs of their whereabouts. Our mayor, Queen Charlene, is second only to the dogs in the townspeople's esteem. Her beloved dogs, two pit bulls named Paco and Peanut, have been taken!

"It's on!" Kritter says.

Naturally, she's beside herself. Inconsolable. The only hope for this town is to rescue her dogs and bring the culprit to justice. A psychic was consulted who believes that the dogs are still alive but in grave danger. She believes they traveled to the east. Toward Howl Haven.

"Any idea who's behind these dognappings?" Jerika asks.

He was a member of the town acrobatics troop called The Ravens. He was loved and adored by the town, but he became impatient with his starting salary and wanted more. Falling victim to his own greed and desires, he left the Ravens and betrayed the town in the worst way. He destroyed Howl Haven and turned it into a sporting den that housed suspicious events. Suddenly Charlesburg was infiltrated by evil. And evil wanted a front row seat at these events.

"Here is his picture." Astrid hands a wanted poster to the group. "Perhaps you recognize him."

"Don Tijuana?" Pila says. "Interesting."

"He looks KIND OF FAMILIAR!" Turducken partially shouts.

"Suspected dog-fighting ringleader," Balthazar reads.

"What a bastard," Jerika says. "Let's kill him."

"Wait," Astrid says. "Take this for your travels. Journeybread." Or rather, my mom's famous pistachio cake but they're willing to go with it.

"Excellent DM," Adam says, Wisdom dropping to 4. "Which way to Howl Haven?"

Oh look, we're out of time. We'll pick up next time on the road to Howl Haven.

Dogspeed.

About the Author

Shelly Mazzanoble is risin' up, back on the street. She did her time, took her chances. Went the distance now she's back on her feet, just a woman and her will to survive.

The Evolution of Shared-World Campaigns in the RPGA

BY CHRIS TULACH

As I write these words, in just a few short weeks the Living Forgotten Realms campaign will debut worldwide. On August 14, the first of many, many adventures will be released for our newest shared-world program. After all the talk over the past months of the history of the RPGA's old programs, now we look to a new program to lead the 4th Edition charge. So what's changed? What's still the same?

Part 5: Living Forgotten Realms

The main goal of the Living Forgotten Realms (or LFR) campaign is to create an organized play experience that is as inclusive and accessible as possible, while still keeping the considerations of a massive shared-world campaign in mind. The barriers for getting involved in LFR have been significantly reduced over past campaigns. The focus of this campaign is on creating fun gameplay.

To start, Living Forgotten Realms will have a regional system for your characters. However, it will work differently than Living campaigns have in the past—no longer is play dictated by where you live in the real world. Rather, you determine your character's region from a list of twelve allowed in the campaign. You can play an adventure from any region, but you might find that playing your character's regional adventures proves more advantageous to you, at times, than to characters who are strangers to your home.

Your ability to access all of the adventures for Living Forgotten Realms means that you'll have plenty of opportunities for play right in your own home. In the first two months of the campaign, at least eighteen adventures will become available for play in LFR. Adventures will be rolled out on a weekly basis, meaning that you'll rarely have want for a new play experience.

Mapping real-world locations to regions in the Forgotten Realms still exists, but really only for administrative and community-building purposes. One of the great strengths of the regional system is localization. Being able to talk to a campaign administrator that lives nearby, as well as helping to organize local events, is all made easier through the regional system. So, while your character might be from one of many different regions, your area falls into a certain administrative boundary that is associated with a particular region.

Adventure play has also evolved. Adventures are tightly focused on a narrower grouping of eligible character levels than in the past. In the days of Living Greyhawk, you might have had an adventure written

for characters levels 1–15, now the adventure will be written for a four-level spread. This gives the adventure a better sense of cohesion and improves its play.

We've also made a change in your ability to replay adventures. In the past, you could only play each adventure once. Now, you can play each adventure once with each appropriate character you possess. If you DM an adventure, you can play it afterwards. Living Forgotten Realms is meant to be a casual play experience, and giving players additional play options allows them to interact with the campaign the way they want.

Our character creation rules have also been overhauled. All too often in the past I've heard "How do I create a character for the RPGA?" The answer's always been a little too complex—each campaign had so many custom rules for character creation. Now, a standardized document that gives base rules for all RPGA character creation is available, and each campaign has an appendix with additional considerations.

Living Forgotten Realms also gives you more freedom to make the character you want without having to jump through a bunch of burning hoops. We want you to get a lot of use out of your books and *D&D Insider*. Other shared-world RPGA programs assume that most material is unavailable for your character without special access. But in Living Forgotten Realms, most material you'd want as a player is accessible right when the book hits the shelves or the monthly issue of *Dragon* is compiled. We'll even let you try out playtest classes (such as the artificer from issue #365) from *Dragon* in Living Forgotten Realms!

Treasure and rewards has been brought in-line with the rules for distribution in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Characters will receive about one magic item per level, and they can buy more with gold they accumulate. Characters don't adventure to just gain access to items—they actually find magic items during play and can choose to select a found item at the end of the adventure.

Recording your adventure play is straightforward. Each player maintains his or her character's adventure log, which contains just the important information: adventure name, XP totals, gold totals, and magic items gained. Heavy bookkeeping is now a thing of the past.

The DM has been given one golden rule: Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

If you want to leave your mark on the Realms, this is the campaign to do it. Close cooperation with R&D and our books team ensures that we're able to provide adventures that fit into the official Realms while still providing you with plenty of variety in adventure locales. Most adventures have adventure questions that are collected to determine the future direction of the campaign. Decisions you and your adventuring company make have an impact on the future!

But perhaps the most important thing that's changed is the philosophy behind being a DM for our shared-world games. In the past, emphasis was placed on tournament-style play. Under this philosophy, adventures had to be run "as written" to provide a "consistent" play experience. Tournament-style play is an artifact of the past, and while it does have its place (like the D&D Championship Series) it runs counter to the experience of an accessible shared-world campaign. Now, the DM has been given one golden rule: Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible. DMs are now empowered to adjust adventures to accomplish this task, just like they would in their home games. Having a good play experience is now the number one priority.

Living Forgotten Realms excitement is building, and if you like what you've read here, go to the RPGA website at www.wizards.com/rpga to get more information on the campaign. Character creation rules and many more details are available right now. LFR has evolved from over 20 years of other shared-world games—come join us and see what the future holds!

This concludes the first series of installments for the RPGA Report. Next month, stay tuned for a new series!

To DM or not to DM

by Bill Slavicsek

For me, there's nothing more fun or fulfilling when it comes to playing D&D than running the game. Right now, I have two active games going on, one on Monday night and one on Thursday night, and I'm the Dungeon Master for both of them. When I look back over my participation in the recreational side of D&D, I see that I'm the DM nine times out of ten. Sure, I've played in games with some great DMs and GMs over the years (Greg Gorden, Ken Rolston, Lester Smith, Monte Cook, Paul Balsamo, to name a few), but there's no denying that I like to be in the DM's chair.

One of the goals I set forth for the new edition of D&D was to make it easier and more fun to be the Dungeon Master. Nothing promotes and strengthens the D&D experience better than having good, solid DMs running good, solid games. I wanted to make the fun and excitement of DMing more accessible to more D&D players. More DMs mean more games, more games mean more D&D players. More D&D players mean more D&D play. How can that not be great for everyone involved?

With the new edition, I hope that more D&D players decide to try their hands at being the Dungeon Master. This is a great time to give it a try, and it's never been easier to pick up the dice and run a game. After all, everyone is learning the new game anyway, so why not take the time to learn how to handle the DM's chair?

Monsters have never been easier to run, and the new encounter design method makes throwing a challenging adventure together a relatively smooth and, yes, fun experience. So try your hand at Dungeon Mastering. If nothing else, you can say you gave it a try. On the other hand, you might just find that you enjoy it and it becomes another way for you to enrich and expand your D&D experience.

To DM or not to DM? There just isn't any question. Give it a shot, and you'll see what I mean.

Bill's Sneak Peek of the Month

I haven't shared something secret for a few columns now, so I figure I'm overdue. This month, I wanted to show you the swordmage, the new class that features prominently in the *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, on sale in September . . . but the RPGA beat me to it! Check it out:

http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=rpga/news/lfrcharacters

So instead, I'll show you a few of the higher-level powers that don't appear in the RPGA's Living Forgotten Realms preview material. As with all of the material appearing in the *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, you can to use this class in either a *Forgotten Realms* campaign, or in any D&D campaign you happen to be playing in. So, without any additional verbiage, here are three paragon-tier powers of the swordmage. . .

Dimensional Slash Swordmage Attack 13

As you slash your foe, your blade cuts a tear in reality, which drags you and your foe to a new location nearby.

Encounter **Arcane, Teleportation, Weapon**
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier damage. Teleport yourself and your target a number of squares equal to 1 + your Constitution modifier. You must appear in a square adjacent to the target.

Bolstering Warding Swordmage Utility 16

The warding around you emits a soothing glow, restoring your vitality.

Daily **Arcane, Stance**
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: At the end of each turn, before making saving throws, remove one effect on yourself that a save can end.

Lightning Rod Swordmage Attack 19

Thrusting the point of your sword into your enemy, you channel a kernel of deadly power into it. Dark clouds seep from the wound and lightning lashes out, shocking nearby foes.

Daily **Arcane, Lightning, Weapon**
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier damage, and ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends). When the target takes ongoing damage from this power, enemies adjacent to the target take 10 lightning damage.
Miss: Half damage, and no ongoing damage.

Want to see more? Check out the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide* and the *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide* for more information, and look for Living Forgotten Realms events debuting at Gen Con!

Next time, I'll provide a preview of what the team and I will be doing at Gen Con, as well as share a few other surprises with you.

Until then, keep playing!

Bill